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V. S. Pritchett

The Last Throw

THE NEW WEEK began for Karvo; for him new weeks were always time repainted. Cheered by the doorman, receptionists, secretaries, he went impatiently into purdah in the lift; on the silent top floor emerged from it on to the stretches of green carpet which seemed to grow like the lawns of the country house life he had just left. He raced to his enormous desk on which lay an elephant's foot presented to him by an African ruler after his latest film, and pressed a button. The call was answered by the fit of dry coughing that contained Chatterton.

"Chatty," Karvo began vigorously. Then, reproachfully, "I thought you had given up smoking?"

"I have," said Chatty. "That was nostalgia. I live in the past."

Time, for Chatty, was what was resumed.

"Can you spare a minute?"

It always took Chatty longer to get to Karvo than Karvo could bear. Passing the open doors of offices, meeting people in the corridors, anywhere in the building, Chatty paused and, with the cough and the ravaged smile of dandyish human wreckage, asked people how they were. How far downhill on the way to dilapidation are you, when shall we all be human souls together? his large eyes seemed to ask. One or two hypochondriacs would tell him. Why does this preposterous organisation run so well, Chatty sometimes asked himself—for he had the vanity of casualties—and replied: "I am the oil in the wheels, the perambulating clinic, the ambulance, the Salvation Army, the conscience—if it has one—kept alive by a sunlamp, an expensive tailor and dozens of teeny-weeny little pills." And with the air of one saying "Goodbye" to himself Chatty walked on.

Also, he added honestly, kept alive by Karvo, King of Kings, the Elephant's Foot, the Life Force. Now for the Monday morning shot! At board meetings Chatty often doodled pictures of Karvo as an elephant sitting in the studio with a crown on his head, a cigar in his mouth and a sceptre in his hand, while a naked cast of well-known actors, actresses and teams of camera-men the size of ants crawled before him. Now Chatty slipped into Karvo's room like a well-dressed fever and saw Karvo in clothes that Karvo supposed were the right thing for High Life in the English countryside. He was sitting in front of a very large book that looked like the Family Bible and there was an uncommon expression of piety or, at any rate, of elevation on his large, unmanageable face.

"When did you go to the doctor last?" said Karvo kindly, but passed immediately to what he loved to do on Mondays: his weekend.

Karvo was at that period in his life when the tide of democracy and cinema had floated him into the private harbours where peers and millionaires and merchant bankers hid their lives. One could not imagine Karvo hunting or playing polo, but *he* could imagine it. Chatty sat down on a sofa and waited to be carried into Karvo's dreamland. Karvo was on to the Hamilton-Spruces for a second, advanced to the Hollinsheds and then, after a long detour among the connections of the Esterhazys, the Radziwills, the Hohenzollerns, the Hotspurs, Talbots, Buckinghams, the Shakespearean cast of the English counties, swerved to France to meet the Albigenses.

"Aren't they cousins of the Radziwills?" Karvo wanted to know.

"No," said Chatty. "The Albigenses were a persecuted race. They are extinct."

Karvo began turning to the title page of the

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book before him. Chatty was wrong: it was not the Bible. It was a bound typescript.

"They were massacred," said Chatty. "In the South of France. About the 13th century. Because of their religion."

"The South of France," said Karvo. His eyes switched on a sharp commercial light. "How many were massacred?"

He was thinking of a crowd scene.

"I don't know, a million; no, perhaps only a few hundred thousand," said Chatty.

"The French Ambassador gave this manuscript to me at the Hamilton-Spruces. His wife wrote it," said Karvo. "Will you have a look at it?" Chatty had one more of his coughing fits as he took the manuscript.

"You *haven't* given up," Karvo accused him. "Cheating never pays."

"It's your cigar," said Chatty.

CHATTY WENT to his office, opened the bottom drawer of his desk where he kept his dozens of bottles of pills, and sitting down to read, rested his feet on the open drawer. First he looked up the name of the Ambassador. Then he studied the name on the title page. As he expected, the author could not possibly be the wife of the French Ambassador. In the hot-house of Society, Karvo usually misnamed the blooms. The name of that lady was not even in the long list of acknowledgements which began with a few eminences, went on to the Bibliothèque Nationale, the British Museum, combed the universities, and ended with inexhaustible gratitude to a dearest husband without whose constant advice and patient etc., etc. The dedication read: *"To Doggie from Pussy."*

Chatty studied the index and appendices and then, rearranging his feet on the drawer, was unable to prevent himself from memorising the 600 pages of historical research. On Friday he went in to see Karvo.

"I'm just off to the country," he said. "I've read that thing. The author is Christine Johnson, a learned woman, first-class historian—no doubt about that. If you're interested in the Albigenses, this is it. You'll be glad to hear about the Cathari heresy. You know of course that they were dualists. Early dieters too: fasted Monday, Wednesday, and Friday every week. This annoyed the Pope. I think she'll have trouble all the same in Chapters Nine and Ten. Speaking as an historian. . . ."

Karvo looked up from the script he was reading.

"Thank you," said Chatty. "Speaking as an historian I would say she goes mad in Chapter Ten. Massacres, of course. Several. The Albigenses were exterminated. There's nothing in it for us."

"Massacres?" said Karvo again. "What's the story?"

"Page 337. Incest," said Chatty. "Brother and sister separated at birth by religious fanatics, meet again, don't know each other, get married—not knowing that, after she's been raped in Toulouse and as they escape over the Pyrenees, that a woman called Clothilde de San Severino has betrayed them to the Inquisition who torture both. Roughly that."

"Torture," said Karvo looking up. "What kind? Incest—have you marked the pages I'd like to see?"

He softened. "My sister would never have let you get into the state you're in, Chatty. Would you mind seeing Mrs Johnson—just politeness—tact, you know?"

"All right," said Chatty.

Karvo's face blurred into one of his occasional looks of shame.

"What have you been up to?" Chatty said.

Karvo shrugged.

THE WOMAN, Christine Johnson, had gone to her house in Paris but came to Chatty's office a fortnight later. Chatty spent an hour-and-a-half with her. Late in the afternoon he went to Karvo's office, opening the door wide instead of sliding in, and shutting it with careful ceremony. He sat down on Karvo's distant sofa, put his feet up and said nothing.

"You're quiet," said Karvo.

"Have you ever experienced a miracle?" said Chatty.

"Many," said Karvo.

"Yes, I know. So have I. I'll put it another way. Have you ever met again or accidentally passed in the street, your first girl-friend whom you haven't seen or heard of for fifteen or twenty years?"

"Mine was in my pram," said Karvo. "I don't remember."

"I'm not talking of childish vice. I mean

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your first adult girl-friend. Have you seen her since, even at a distance?"

"That's a miracle I've avoided."

"Why?" asked Chatty. "I can see her: short, very fat, strong glasses, a touch of something on the skin, spots perhaps, dirty raincoat, sullen with congested virtue. Round-shouldered. There's nothing against that. A lot of girls go in for being round-shouldered: they are trying out ways of being important or graceful, learning the job. But wearing a seaman's heavy black jersey, no breasts or rather creased woollen bumps in the jersey. The jersey is too large. Walking as if still marching into the class-room. '*Girls! Forward March! Follow Diana.*' Another thing—you could never see her alone. She was always with some other girl—very pretty, but for some insane reason the pretty one didn't appeal to you."

"Come to the point," said Karvo.

"And I don't suppose you've ever seen her years later with the man she married eventually—a weed with a small electrical shop or something like that and they live out at—well, you know those places—with four children who have kicked the garden to pieces. . . . Informative, rebuking, that's what she was. Always ticking you off—'*No, Karvo. Stop it, Karvo*'."

"I remember that," said Karvo, putting on his martyred face. "Stop wasting my time. Kitchen-sink is finished in pictures—you know that, Chatty."

"I've just met mine," said Chatty. "Can I have a drink? No, don't ring for it. I'll get it myself."

Chatty went to Karvo's drink cabinet. It was large and designed to look like the West Front of a Gothic Cathedral, but without the saints.

"I can see why you shy off the subject," said Chatty. "I would have done so two hours ago, until Christine walked into my office. Except for the electrician and the four children, she used to be exactly as I have told you—but, my God! A butterfly has risen from that awful chrysalis. If it had been her pretty friend Ann I would not have been surprised—but Christine! The miracle has happened. As a matter of fact I must have changed too. Down at the reception she told the girl she had an appointment with Sir Arthur Chatterton. By the way, she is not the wife of the French Ambassador.

"Who said she was?" said Karvo.

"Sweet Jesus—but let it pass."

"She's not only exquisite. She has brains." Chatty's voice became sad. "More than brains. Considering what she's got—what a waste."

"How d'you mean?" said Karvo. "Many women have first-class minds."

"I wasn't thinking of her mind," said Chatty. "I was thinking of her money. She's rich. I was thinking of her clothes. How many distinguished lady historians do you know with emeralds on their fingers, who have sacked Paris for their clothes, whose hats seem to have blown over from the Place Vendôme and who, besides owning houses in London and Paris, spend their winters on their dear, dear brother's estate in Toulouse?

"She was wearing a hat like a birthday-cake made of air and a very short dress. I suppose it was a dress? She seemed to be getting out of it rather than wearing it—pretty well succeeded on the left thigh and the right shoulder. A hot-house flower with large glasses like windows. All the fat gone. A butterfly—but what am I talking about? A dragonfly," he said.

Chatty coughed.

"You oughtn't to talk so much," said Karvo. "You're getting over-excited."

"I knew her by her teeth," Chatty said sadly. "And her voice. It used to come frosted out of the heart's deep freeze. It still does. Oh dear, it brought it all back. Christine and then her pretty friend Ann and me all sitting in Lipp's," said Chatty.

"Is she married?" said Karvo.

"To a man in the Foreign Office, an adviser, whatever that is. Ronnie."

"So," said Karvo. "You've missed the boat."

"Oh no," said Chatty, "they've asked me to dinner the week after next when they come back from Scotland. They're staying with the Loch Lomonds."

Karvo raised both his chins.

"I've stayed with the Loch Lomonds," he said.

"SO WHAT WAS IT LIKE?" Karvo sneered. "Bollinger, Mouton Rothschild. . . ?"

Chatty was lying once more on the sofa in Karvo's room.

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"You remember the husband of your first girl-friend," said Chatty. "The man with the small electrical shop or television rentals, if you like, the man who replaced you in the loving heart you broke. . . ."

"I never broke any girl's heart," said Karvo looking up from his letters. "Accountants break mine."

"Imagine you are back in Paris. Now here's a girl, Cambridge, double first, ruins her poor pink-rimmed eyes in the Bibliothèque Nationale, borrows the occasional ten or twenty francs from you because she's hungry—you see her, this Miss Sorbonne in her chrysalis days, your friend, suddenly avoiding you in the Boulevard Saint-Germain, walking by night, in silence, except that she scrapes a foot. She is with one of those tall young men who keeps bumping his dirty raincoat into hers because he walks aslant and bends to talk down into the top of her head, as if he were trying to graze there—not that there was much to graze on, her hair was very thin. He edges her towards the gutter or into those walls saying *Défense d'Afficher*, as the case may be, talking abut the Guermantes, say. . . . And you say bitterly to yourself, 'Two pairs of small strong glasses, two carnivorous sets of teeth have felt an irresistible attraction'."

One of Karvo's telephones rang.

"Karvo," said Karvo, heaving half of his body over the desk and in a voice suddenly plaintive said:

"No, my darling. Yes, my darling. You'd better not, my darling. In that case you must, my darling."

And then put down the telephone and got his body back on to the chair, breathless, his eyelids blinking, paler than his face. He had his crucifixion look and he said to Chatty:

"What were you saying? That was Dolly."

"I was saying," said Chatty, sitting up and raising his voice, "they live in a bloody mansion. Cézannes, Picassos, Soutines, Renoirs, up the stairs, everywhere. From the drawing-room window you can see all the most expensive flowering shrubs and trees in bloom in the Park. A man-servant brings in the champagne and in comes the adviser to the Foreign Office."

"Who is that?"

"I've told you," said Chatty. "Ronnie."

"There he is," said Chatty. "And he leans down and starts grazing on *your* hair now. He is young but has gone bald early, very confidential, and nods at every word you say. Congratulating himself. As she floats into the room, he says 'It's a winner, isn't it?' "

"She is wearing a dress made of sheets of flame. One of the flames appears to be looped between her legs, but of course that can't be true and for the rest of the evening you keep trying to work it out. And she says, as she comes in: *'Doggie!'* And he looks at her and says *'Pussy!'* They've come back from Scotland via Vienna and Paris."

"Who else was at the party?" said Karvo thirstily.

"No party," said Chatty. "Just his sister Rhoda. Up from the country for a couple of days shopping. A nice pensive woman, older than her brother, looking like an engraving of George Eliot, heavy dark hair peacefully parted in the middle, Victorian brooch, a long romantic poem. One of those women you see talking to gardeners, walking on lawns, driving off in little cars to local education committees. A botanist too, in a religious way. We talked about a bowl of white peonies in the drawing room. *'Paeonia,'* she said. She was very reserved and shy. She said the plant had been introduced into Cornwall by the Brethren of Saint Michael. In the 13th century. She wouldn't interest you, Karvo, she's a good woman."

"She doesn't," said Karvo. "Get on."

"Quite a medieval evening up till then," said Chatty. "Suddenly Ronnie, the husband, says 'Pussy, you must *show* them!' As he says this he gives a lick of glee to his lips and his hands jump about in his trouser pockets. 'Oh Doggie,' she says. 'Shall I be naughty? It's dreadful, dearest Chatty. Hats, Chatty! I've sacked the Place Vendôme. Bring your champagne'."

And Chatty told how she took his hand, a weak thin hand—he could feel all the bones in it—attached to an arm of steel. He was nearly dead, he said, by the time they all got up the long curving staircase, not from the climb so much as from sinking almost to the ankles in the hush of a deep yellow stair-carpet. The four of them arrived in a large bedroom that had three high wide windows, the bay swelling over the lawns of a terrace. But Chatty imagined from what was going on on the walls of the room that he was in the Burmese jungle. He wouldn't have been surprised, he

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said, to see the violet bottoms of mandrils sitting in the branches. Ronnie's sister stood apart. She had obviously seen it all before and, as beauties often do, looked unwell. Furry animals, like animal royalty, were spread on the floor. There was a golden bed, a Cleopatra's barge. Ronnie's face had stopped nodding. His mouth opened and he looked like a man congratulating himself on being about to be turned into a tiger, for Christine took a little run, almost a flight, to a wardrobe. . . .

"Don't bother about the wardrobe," said Karvo.

". . . She pulled the doors open and out fell an enormous heap of hats, like a cloud of petals on the floor. About eighty of them. I spilled my champagne down my tie," said Chatty. "It was the least I could do. Let me go on. 'She'll wear them all,' Ronnie says. 'Pussy, is your back tired? She has to rest her back.' 'Doggie' she says and pouts. Rhoda, the sister, is still standing apart. She is not drinking. She is a healthy woman who likes country walks but when the hats came tumbling out she swells up and goes red in the face as if she is struggling against a pain in the chest. The stairs of course. Heart, I suppose—all those stairs."

So, CHATTY SAID, he tried to calm her by asking where she lived in the country and she said she lived this side of Bath and he told her his aunt had a farm on the far side of the city and how he went down there for weekends.

" 'It's your part of the country too,' I said to Christine. 'How nice, how strange.' "

"Always be careful when you talk to girls, Karvo," said Chatty. "Profit by my experience. She said I was mixing her up with Ann. Ann came from Bath. *She* came from Yorkshire."

"What of it?" said Karvo.

"Didn't your first girl-friend ever slice you in half with a look?" said Chatty.

Karvo had stopped listening so Chatty got down to business.

"We went downstairs to the Albigenses."

Ronnie edged him into a wall against a small Soutine as if about to give him extremely private information about a foreign country.

" 'The return to the 12th century,' Ronnie says. 'It's absolutely *the* modern subject. It's the world today. Religious wars, mass murder, the crushing of small cultures. The Inquisition. It went on for a century. They appealed to the Pope of course.' ('Dear dreadful Pope Innocent' Christine called across. 'The Stalin of the time' said Ronnie bearing down closer.) 'Tortures. Dukes, the Provençal nobility appeared in crowds on the scene'."

Chatty gathered there was a sort of liberal called the Duc d'Aquitane, trying to keep the peace, but the murder of Peter of Castelnau brought Pope Innocent's storm-troopers down from the north.

" 'Castelnaus, weren't they cousins?' says Christine to her husband. And to Chatty 'The Johnsons came originally from Toulouse.'

"The sister interrupts. 'Putney,' she says.

" 'You'll find it in the Cistercian records,' says Christine. 'Or you can look it up in Schmidt or in Vaissete.' "

It was a piquant moment, Chatty said. There you had on the one hand a scholarly genealogist who could slip back to the 13th century as easy as pie but who, to be frank, was a *belle laide* especially when she showed her teeth, being challenged by a peaceful botanist who had a corner in monkish gardening.

"I enjoyed it," said Chatty to Karvo. "It took me back to the old days in Paris. I'm afraid the two ladies don't get on."

Karvo put on his martyred look.

"It was all right," said Chatty. "Ronnie saved the situation. A born diplomat. He started telling me about the children of light and the children of darkness and finished up talking about the *Perfecti*."

Karvo looked up.

"No," said Chatty. "It's not a cigar."

THE JOHNSONS asked Karvo to dinner. "That woman's electric. You're wrong about her book," said Karvo to Chatty when he came back. "I read the passages you marked. Wow! There's a story. She's going places."

When the mid-Atlantic slick flooded into Karvo's English, Chatty knew that one of what he called Karvo's Seasons was about to begin.

"I think," said Karvo, "you offended her. Did you say something?"

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"Something rude about the 13th century, I expect," said Chatty.

"No, something's bugging her," said Karvo.

"I left with Rhoda that evening. We walked down the side of the Park under the trees," said Chatty. "Perhaps it was that. Now Rhoda, there's a woman. She knows the names of flowers. Too plump for you, Karvo. And forty. She's the complete English lady—one sees a lot of it in the country. So beautifully conventional and uncandid, quiet but deep—you know—when they talk about their neighbours you aren't sure whether they are people or rhododendrons; whether the Winstanleys, say, are a breed of cattle or the county education chairman an asparagus bed. A good green-fingered woman—knows what is ranunculaceous and what is not. In human life, I mean. The only trouble is that they are always doing something for others. Lovely summer night and all she can do is to ask me the name of Christine's professor in Paris. One of her neighbours wants to send her daughter there."

"What are you talking about?" said Karvo.

"I'm talking about love," said Chatty. "Not as you know it. I could love a woman like that."

"I want a treatment for this story," said Karvo.

And with that Karvo's Albigensian period began. The word "massacre" had caught him. So had "torture." So had "incest." So had Christine. His head filled up with crime, sex and churches, romanesque towers, medieval obscenities, antiques. After a month he bought a Van Gogh—and wouldn't say what he gave for it—one of the painter's swirling cornfields, done in the asylum. It matched his mood. He galloped over the Pyrenees with the incestuous rebel couple. Everywhere he went—to expensive restaurants, embassies, and house parties—Christine and her husband were there. They gave enormous parties.

"They never ask me," said Chatty.

"You know, of course," Karvo said, "she's a Castelnau. That's why she wrote the book."

"No," said Chatty. "That's her husband."

"I don't take to him," said Karvo. "You've got it wrong."

"I think," said Chatty, "they're both Castelnaus. There's a Castelnau Road in Putney."

"That's not surprising," said Karvo, briefly an historian. "The survivors and descendants of the Albigenses split up, half joined up with the Huguenots and went to Bordeaux and the other half to England. They made a fortune in cotton. That's where she gets her money. She told me her brother's still got the place in Toulouse."

"Incidentally the Castelnaus were on the wrong side—in the pay of the Pope. Did she mention it?" said Chatty. "Of course I know one should never trust one's ancestors. Does Dolly get on with her?" Chatty asked, speaking now of Karvo's latest wife.

"You know what women are about clothes. I'm taking Dolly to Paris," said Karvo.

"My aunt is not well. I'm off to the country," said Chatty.

THERE WERE LONG SEASONS in Karvo's life; there were short ones when he was between pictures. Seasons were apt to turn into cycles. The summer passed. The winds of early September were bashing the country gardens. "The hollyhocks are flat on their backs," Rhoda wrote in a note to Chatty. She added a postscript saying "I discovered the Professor's name—it was Ducros." Grit was blowing into Chatty's office window as he read the treatment.

"The story has no shape or end," he said to Karvo. "What does it mean, what is the message?"

Karvo spread his arms wide and held them in the air. Seeing nothing in them he began to reach for a button on his desk.

"I'll tell you what it means, what we have got to bring out," Chatty said. He stood up and recited: "The massacre of the Albigensians meant the final loss of the great medieval culture of Provence. It was lost for ever to European civilisation."

Karvo was suspicious, then appalled. He changed physically before Chatty's eyes. The word "culture" piled up like a wall that got larger every day. He stared at all that masonry and boredom settled on him.

"Funny," he said, "those are the very words Christine used."

"They're in the script," said Chatty.

"It is true," he went on, looking at a pill on the palm of his hand and then swallowing it. "Nothing lasts."

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The learned Christine had cooked her goose, as Chatty said, with a phrase. In the following weeks she and the Albigensian heresy were done for.

"Write her a note," said Karvo. "There's a good fellow."

"No," said Chatty. "She's your baby. She dropped me. I burn with resentment. I still can't think what I did."

"It's personally embarrassing," said Karvo, lifting his blotter and pretending to look for something.

"Much more for me—old time's sake, you know," said Chatty. "Get Phillips to do it." (Phillips managed Karvo's company.) " 'Dear Mrs Johnson, we have now had a full breakdown of the costs, etc., etc. . . .' He is a master of the commercial lament."

The letter was sent and Chatty returned the manuscript.

"My office seems empty without it—modern almost," said Chatty. "Sad. You meet your childhood sweetheart again and then—nothing."

He waited for the inevitable aftermath of Karvo's dreams: he would hear Christine's syllables freezing the man who ignorantly rejected Provençal culture and the birthplace of the Castelnaus.

But there was no reply. After a few weeks the manuscript was returned by the Post Office. *"Unknown"* was written across it in pencil by an enthusiastic hand.

Chatty telephoned to the house. No manservant answered. He heard the voice of the cook. She had come in, she said, to collect her things before the removal men got them. You could trust no one today. The Johnsons had gone to their house in Paris and Mrs Johnson had gone on to Toulouse—her brother had died—such difficulties about the estate! The cook did not know the address. The London house had been sold. She was damping the telephone wires with her tears.

"Such troubles," she said.

An inexplicable hole had opened in London social life. It was as if whole streets, indeed the Park itself, had been removed, as if the map had been changed, without consultation, overnight, and non-entity had supervened.

"Anyone could see there was trouble there," Karvo said. "Ronnie Johnson was an adventurer. He came in, stripped her of every cent she had. I heard him talking to a Greek banker at the Hollinsheds about the trouble she was having about getting money out of France."

"I'll find out where she is from Rhoda," said Chatty.

"Forget it," said Karvo.

"I DONT WANT to talk about it on the telephone. May I come and see you?" Chatty heard Rhoda's clear harvesting voice gathering sheaves of moral beauty as it came across the hills, the fields and the woods, the gardens and the village churches from the borders of Somerset. Partridge shooting had begun.

When Chatty was clearing up after Karvo's passages through peoples' lives he usually took the grander casualties to *The Hundred and Five* but it was closed for redecoration and Chatty was obliged to ask Rhoda to *The Spangle*. This little club was hardly the place for a lady from the country and one who could never be a casualty. *The Spangle* would be packed with people whose cheques bounced and whom "one had never met." By nine in the evening couples were hunched and whispering nose to nose across the gingham cloth of their tables, listening not to each other but for erotic news from the table behind them. It was a place for other peoples' confessions. There was the hope of being refreshed by scenes breaking out now and then. Les, the proprietor, who wore a cowboyish shirt, was a big-bellied, soft man with heavy spongy arms, white as suet pudding. He was in his sixties and was damp and swollen with the public secrets of his customers. Most people came in asking for someone else.

"Was John in last night?"

Les would perhaps reply "Sarah was asking for him," or "I had a card from Flo. She's in Spain," or "Phil can't leave his dog," or, flatly, "Ada's barred."

Rhoda was wearing a cardigan, a green blouse, a tweed skirt and good walking shoes, but Chatty saw her face had changed. The sad George Eliot gaze had gone. The thick smooth black hair had been cropped into a variety of lengths so that she looked as if she had been pulled—not unwillingly—through a hedge—that is to say, younger. Victory, even giddiness, was in her beautiful brown eyes. Les stared with suspicion and offence at

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any new woman guest brought to the club and scarcely nodded to her when Chatty presented her, but Rhoda did not mind. She sat down, after an efficient look around her and said: "What a killing place." The word "killing" made Chatty happy; it was so lyrically out of date.

"Tell me who everyone is," she said.

"Les is in a bit of a mood tonight," Chatty began by apologising for Les. "He's on the watch for people who forgot to bring him a present for his birthday. He used to be an actor."

So Chatty and Rhoda fell to whispering and looking around like everyone else. He thought he was in for a restful evening and started talking about his farm. He looked at her and saw starlings flocking, avenues of elms. Rhoda allowed this, then abruptly she said: "So you turned down Christine's film."

Chatty's face twitched. Experienced in consoling Karvo's discarded actresses and mistresses, he had little experience in consoling authors. He certainly did not know how to begin with authors' relatives.

"The sad fact is," he said, "that the best films are made out of bad books, not out of good ones."

He saw the formidable Rhoda appear.

"That is not true," she said with the quiet authority of a thoughtful life. He now saw himself in for an ethical evening. But he was wrong again. She was too firm or too gentle to argue. He ordered their meal and he saw her pursuing truth placidly on her own through a large plate of whitebait, a fish that would have given him gout within the hour.

"It is always embarrassing turning down the work of a friend," he said. "One always does it at the wrong moment. Family crisis, brother dying—actually dead, I believe. I hear Christine's in Toulouse. For the funeral, I suppose."

Rhoda, a frugal woman, scrupulously ate the last small fish and then drank a glass of white wine straight off. He noted the care of the first operation, the abandon of the second.

"That is what I want to talk to you about," she said.

Les was calling to a young woman: "Hullo darling! Where's Stephen? Andrew was asking for him."

"Stephen," whispered Chatty, "has forgotten Leslie's birthday."

But Rhoda had lost interest in the "killing" aspect of the club.

"They are not in Toulouse," she said.

"Perhaps it was Paris, I forget," said Chatty.

"Christine's brother is not dead. She hasn't got a brother."

"BUT SURELY!" Chatty said. If there was one thing he remembered about the Christine of so many years ago, it was Christine telling him of her brother, retired from the Navy, living in the South of France, growing his own wine: "the head of the family," with its old-fashioned overtones of solid money, family counsels, trusts, wills, marriages, crests on the silver and so on, and the weary care of her voice as she threw away her brother's distinctions, the phrase had stuck with him. He had read it in novels. To hear it spoken had been one of those instances of a forgotten piece of social history flying out of the past into the present like a stone coming through a window.

"Paul, the head of the family," said Chatty.

Seeing Rhoda's eyes studying him he lost his confidence.

"Perhaps it was Ann's brother. One of them had a brother. It's a long time ago," he said.

"I've never met Ann," said Rhoda. "But I am quite certain Christine hasn't got a brother. Never had."

Chatty backed out, for he saw the truth-seeker in Rhoda's eyes.

"Or I may be mixing it up with the book," he said. "The girl who went off with her brother."

"I haven't read the book," said Rhoda with a flick of the whip in her voice.

Chatty started telling the story but she interrupted.

"There is *no* family," she said.

"But she comes from the north," Chatty said. "Yorkshire or somewhere. She said so at dinner. Her mother died, the father was killed in an air raid. There was just this brother."

"Her mother died," said Rhoda, "but her father and her step-mother are still alive. Not in the north of England. They've never been near it. They live less than twenty miles from you, the other side of Bath. They run a small public house."

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Chatty saw that pile of pink, white and lacy hats come tumbling out of her wardrobe like butterflies and heard Christine's voice saying:

"No, I am a Yorkshire woman. You're thinking of Ann."

"I have been to see them," said Rhoda. "They haven't seen or heard of Christine for sixteen years. Her father used to be a seed salesman. They haven't heard a thing about her since she was a student in Paris. They didn't even know she was married. Their name is Till. She has a half-sister who runs the place, a nice girl but it's an awful pub. The father retired there to drink the profits. He said 'Tell that girl if she comes near here I'll get my belt out'."

The waitress brought *Boeuf Bourguignon* for Rhoda and, for Chatty, a sole. What an appetite she had. Rhoda continued her pursuit of the truth in silence through the food at once. Chatty gaped at his fish.

"This is good," she said at last. "You're letting yours get cold. I found them through the headmistress of her school. I am on the Education Committee. She said Christine was the cleverest girl they had ever had."

It was a principle of Chatty's to believe everything he was told, but now the very fish on his plate seemed opposed to him. It had been served on the bone and he hesitated to put his knife to it for fear of what he would find inside. He moved his mind to Paris. He saw a heavy black sweater, a pair of twisted stockings, a student's notebook on a café table.

"I can't believe it," said Chatty. "Hundreds of girls leave home, I know. . . . They turn up in this place. . . ."

"The London house is sold, the bailiffs have the pictures. Ronnie is at home with us. He has left her—thank God."

"Oh dear," said Chatty.

"The film," said Rhoda, "was her last throw. In the last ten years she has run through more than £100,000 of Ronnie's money. One hundred thousand."

RHODA CHANGED before Chatty's eyes. The twined leafy branches that had seemed to frame the pensive face of the rural botanist dissolved. He saw instead the representative of a huge family trust.

"Where is she now?" he said.

"In a nursing home," she snapped at him. "I know where I'd put her!"

Chatty put down his knife and fork. He could not bear the sad colour of the fish.

"Poor Christine," he said looking at it.

"Poor Christine!" said Rhoda loudly, indeed addressing the club. The quiet oval face became square and the country skin flushed to a dark red. "Poor Ronnie, you mean. She has ruined him."

"They were rather going it, of course," said Chatty. "I suppose Ronnie knew what he was doing. What does he say?"

"He knew nothing until ten days ago. Nothing at all about her. Lies from the beginning to the end."

And when she said "Lies" Rhoda shouted.

The customers of *The Spangle* looked up and glanced at one another with joy. A row! That shout was in the genuine tradition of the club. Everyone was at home. At such moments the quarrelling parties usually called for more drink. Les stepped behind the bar ready to get it. Rhoda corrected herself.

"Lies," she said quietly. "Pure invention."

"Ronnie *must* have known," Chatty said. "How did he find out?"

"He didn't. I did. Ronnie knew nothing, absolutely nothing. I had had my suspicions when he brought her down to stay before they were married; I couldn't stand her delivery."

Chatty raised the bottle to Rhoda's glass and filled his own.

"It took time," said Rhoda. "You've known her longer than any of us," she said, "did she ever say or do. . . ."

She stopped. She saw Chatty's face, so rakishly marked by the lines of his illnesses, smooth out and another face set very hard upon it. She was going to accuse him next. The pursuit of truth was going too far. Rhoda's voice had lost its note of moral beauty. He was thinking of the postscript to her note: "The name of the Professor is Ducros." She had been hunting then.

"Mr Chatterton," she said. "I love my brother. He is everything to me. He always will be. We have always been close all our lives since we were children. He is something very rare—a good man. I would die for him. I knew I was right about that girl. He is easily deceived. It isn't the money. I hate

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what she has done to him. I love my brother more than anything in the world."

How many times Chatty had heard the word "love" spoken at *The Spangle* by girls with globes of tears hanging in their eyes, by girls with their teeth set, by girls with their mouths twisted by rage. He patted their hands, told their fortunes, made up love affairs of his own—generally the most successful way of soothing them. He had the sad story of the girl who was in a Swiss sanatorium with him: they had both lost a lung. Such affectionate creatures all these girls were! They forgot their rages when they heard this and, looking at him with contented superstition, as if he were a talisman, their eyes cleared, glanced around the room and began their eternal quest once more.

But Rhoda was not in their case. She gazed at him not asking for help, but with the self-possession of one born for a single passion. In twenty years time that look would be unalterably there. She not only loved: she was avenged. She had not given up until she had got her brother back. Chatty wished that victory in love would look more becoming.

"It is extraordinary, I agree, and I am sure if you say so, it is true," said Chatty.

"Every word," said Rhoda.

"And a hundred thousand pounds is a lot of money."

"It's not only the money," she said.

"Well, I don't see really, if you think about it, what harm has been done. Ronnie was having the time of his life. He obviously adored her. . . ."

"He was tricked."

". . . buying her houses, taking her round, enjoying a splash, showering her with Renoirs and hats. With a brain like hers she might still be sitting on the steps of the British Museum eating a sandwich out of a paper bag. He must have liked it. Quite frankly she isn't a beauty. Ronnie created her."

"She deceived him."

"I think he knew," said Chatty. "I expect he'd been bored up to then. Boredom makes you close your eyes and take the plunge."

"She's such a snob. That accent!" said Rhoda.

"Pedantic," he said. "Scholars often are. Anyway, one gets used to accents in the theatre."

He saw he was annoying her.

"It's really a fairy tale, isn't it?" he said. "Ronnie waved a wand."

For a moment he thought she was going to lean across the table and hit him. He sat back and recited:

The Owl and the Pussy Cat went to sea
In a beautiful sea green boat
They took some honey and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five pound note.

The poem was too much for her. A tear dropped down her cheek.

"You've got the line wrong," she said struggling against the pain. "It was a *'pea'* green boat."

"It was all those scholarships that gave her away. I traced them back," she said bitterly.

But the tears came faster.

THE SITUATION was getting too clear for Chatty. He did not wish to see, too distinctly, the good woman who in a passion of jealousy had hunted her sister-in-law down. He was disturbed by a wish that Christine and not Rhoda was sitting before him. He gave a number of dry coughs, but he could not cough the wish away.

"Diana," Chatty called to the waitress, an overworked girl who had the habit of keeping a cigarette burning on a saucer by the kitchen hatch, "If you'll bring me a packet of cigarettes I'll marry you."

"You, Mr Chatterton!" said the girl. "That'll be the day."

"It's desperate."

The girl saw Rhoda's tears and pulled a face. *The Spangle* liked tears. She fetched the cigarettes. Chatty stood the packet on end considering it, not with passion but with lust. Rhoda saw the packet through her tears.

"You can't! You mustn't," she said strictly. Chatty picked up the packet and held it to his nose.

"Lovely temptation," he said, touching the packet with his lips and putting it down again. Rhoda's tears had stopped. In none of Chatty's experiences at *The Spangle* had he ever known that a packet of cigarettes could bring tears to so sudden an end.

"Did they have any children?" Chatty asked.

"No—that is one blessing."

"Perhaps that was the trouble?" said Chatty.

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The expression on the good woman's face was one of horror so deep that she was silent.

And now Les came to their table, ignoring Rhoda.

"How's Karvo?" he asked. "Maggy was asking for him."

"Oh God!" said Chatty

"Who is Maggy?" said Rhoda when Les walked off.

"It's a long story. Too personal. Some other time. I'm thinking about Christine. What a performance—one has to admit."

"I don't think that remark is appropriate," said Rhoda. "There's a time when sympathy stops. I think of her conscience. What a hell she must have lived in knowing every day for years that she might be found out."

The satisfaction of Rhoda's voice shocked Chatty. He gave up trying to charm her.

"Oh, I don't think conscience troubled her at all," he said gaily. "I don't think she was in hell. That is what I mean by performance. She knew her part in every detail. It must have thrilled her to act it, adding a little touch every day. Only an academic could do that! It's a pretty commonplace story really, but to her—what a triumph! What documentation! Imagine her memory! And making Ronnie love it."

"Not now," said Rhoda. "She has lost him for good."

"That is true," said Chatty. "The sad thing is that she has lost Paul."

"You are infuriating," said Rhoda. "*He never existed*, I tell you."

"I know. She invented him. That is what makes it worse. She has lost her only real friend."

Chatty was glad to see that the perfect Rhoda looked troubled.

"What you are saying is that I did wrong," she said.

"I think you did what you *wanted* to do," said Chatty.

"I can see," she said, "that you don't like me. Hasn't anyone any moral sense nowadays! You knew her. I thought it was my duty to tell you. That was my only motive."

Rhoda picked up her handbag.

"Diana, my sweetheart," Chatty called to the waitress, "I seem to want my bill."

They sat silently until the bill came and then Rhoda said:

"Thank you for a lovely evening. You must drive over and see us sometime. Ronnie would like that."

KARVO SAID to Chatty:

"A hundred thousand pounds? Who told you?"

"Clothilde," said Chatty.

"She was on the Pope's side. You remember the Albigensians. . . ."

"We didn't make it," said Karvo.

"I know," said Chatty. "I mean the escape of the lovers over the Pyrenees, but Clothilde is with them. She has tracked down the incest story and she betrays them to the Inquisition out of jealousy. Rhoda Johnson. Another tragedy in my life. I've seen into the heart of a good woman. Never do that."

Karvo ignored this.

"It was a Swedish story really," said Karvo furtively. "The Swedes could do it."

"No, not Swedish, not even Albigensian—very English, west country. The lover's name was Paul, purely imaginary, a childhood fantasy I expect. Still his estate was useful naturally, as capital security, especially when he died."

"Who are we talking about?" said Karvo.

"Christine's brother Paul," said Chatty.

"But he's dead."

"You don't listen," Chatty said. "Think of what he was going to leave her. Did she ever mention it to you?"

"Yes," said Karvo surprised. "She did. Why?"

"Historians go mad. All that research and detail work gets them down. They crack up. Get delusions of grandeur and, in two minutes, they are popping in their personal story. They're badly paid, too. She needed the money. You can't blame them," said Chatty.

"When did the Johnsons leave?" said Karvo.

"They didn't leave. She's had a breakdown. She is in a nursing home."

"Yes, you told me—when was that?"

"Weeks and weeks ago." Chatty took out his diary. "October 4th."

Then Chatty saw Karvo do an extraordinary thing. The man who couldn't remember his wife's birthday, the martyr who was always in trouble because he could not remember the dates of his several wedding anniversaries, the man for whom everything

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was done by secretaries, the man who was entirely public, surprised Chatty by the secretive way in which he now performed a private action: he, too, took out a pocket diary. Chatty had seen Karvo do this only once before when he was ill; indeed Karvo had shown him a page with an *X* and a figure written against it. The first Tuesday in every month he recorded his weight. He opened the diary now and said:

"October 4th—that's what I've got. Why did you make a note of it?"

"A sense of loss," said Chatty. "She'd gone."

"I didn't know she meant anything to you", said Karvo bashfully.

"There it is," said Chatty. "Nor did I. One thinks of it at night."

"Chatty . . ," Karvo began. "Well, no—I don't want to pry into your private affairs."

"Oh no, there was nothing like that in it. I liked her best when she was dirty and fat. I asked them both down to the farm but she wouldn't come. It rather hurt at the time, but I see it now. It might have saved them, even both of them."

Karvo pressed the button and asked for his chauffeur to be sent round.

"A hundred thousand pounds," said Karvo but in the fond, impersonal, admiring manner of one who sees yet one more piece of financial history pass down the Thames, under the bridges and out to sea.

"Tell the chauffeur to wait," said Chatty. "Karvo, I don't want to pry into your private affairs. I want to ask you about ours—yours and mine."

Karvo saw no escape from Chatty when the lines of his face smoothed out.

"All right, if that is what you want to know, she's as frigid as stone", said Karvo. "I tried—well, not actually tried—at the Hollinsheds."

"Oh I knew *that*", said Chatty. "I discovered that in Paris years ago. I was just finding out when Ronnie Johnson knocked at my door. A very innocent fellow—he didn't realise what was going on. Or perhaps he did. I remember he nodded. Don't let's talk about it. What I want to know is how much she touched you for on October 4th? She got £50 out of me. I made a note of it."

"You fool," boasted Karvo. "She got £750 out of me, guaranteed by the estate."

"Paul's," said Chatty.

KARVO HAD a special way of falling into speechlessness. He would lean back in his chair, then would seem to be making a quick inventory of everything in the office, then close his eyes. It was as if he was under an anaesthetic at the dentist's. His inner life would become brilliant with ridiculous dramas and when he came round, panting, he would see what he must do. He came round now.

"I can get it off expenses," he said. "Why did you do it, Chatty?"

"Oh, you know—the pathos of the rich."

Karvo grunted and got up.

"Can I drop you anywhere?"

"No," said Chatty. "I'm going to try and see Christine."

"Don't be a fool," said Karvo. "You'll never get it back."

"That is not what I'm going for", said Chatty. "She's alone."

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P. T. Bauer

Foreign Aid, Forever?

Critical Reflections on a Myth of Our Time

"It is obvious that official aid is vitally important because it has special characteristics which make it indispensable to the developing countries."

Richard Wood,
Minister for Overseas Development,
Hansard (9 June 1971)

"Party political battle is able to rage to the right and left, but on aid and development there is a bilateral agreement. We tend to agree with each other and to express our mutual concern about the third world."

Judith Hart,
Shadow Minister for Overseas Development,
Hansard (27 April 1972)

FOREIGN AID celebrated its Silver Jubilee in January. Point Four of President Truman's message to Congress of January 1949 which proposed aid to underdeveloped countries inaugurated a new political, economic and ideological movement in our times. It has had far-reaching and sometimes brutal consequences, enormous costs, little success, and virtually no adverse criticism.

The early days of foreign aid were marked by high hopes and what must now seem absurd optimism. In the 1950s prominent American economists argued that limited aid over a few years would ensure the self-sustaining economic development of the recipients, and thus remove the need for external assistance. But now aid is envisaged as a practically open-ended commitment extending into the indefinite future. Thus, the Pearson Report envisages aid as extending into the 21st century; and Mr Reginald Prentice, former Minister for Overseas Development, has even said that we must expect it to extend beyond the 21st century. Yet there is little talk of the failure of foreign aid. In fact foreign aid continues to increase. Even President Amin of Uganda still receives aid from Britain (besides new and additional UN aid).

Incredible as it may seem, British and multi-national aid even goes to the oil states of the Middle East and North Africa including Bahrein, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya and Saudi Arabia, although they have vast oil reserves and oil revenues which they are often unable to spend, and whose per capita incomes in some cases much exceed those of many donors including Britain. The governments of several aid-recipient oil states themselves grant subsidies to other countries.

The explanation is, of course, that foreign aid is an act of faith.

THE ETHICS—*as well as the economics—of post-War "Foreign Aid" from the rich West to the poor countries of the Third World have come to an impasse. The defenders of the Aid orthodoxy have become a little absurd. We must help, and continue to help, and (above all) be seen to be trying to help—even if it doesn't really help them at all. Rarely in modern history has the combination of wealth, guilt, and hypocrisy been so self-servingly conspicuous. Surely there must be a better way of enabling backward lands to rise out of their wretchedness, other than by disorienting them, corrupting them, and ultimately making them incapable of helping themselves?*

In the name of humanitarianism, we aid Third World tyrannies; in the name of development, we subsidise hopelessly bankrupt enterprises; in the name of loving-kind good-neighbourly relations, we close our eyes as to how in hard reality our neighbours are actually faring.

Such dark aspects of the ethico-economic relations between the Third World and the West are usually overlooked in the moral injunctions of the Aid Lobbyists. They hate poverty so much that they no longer have compassionate time left over for the lot of just plain poor people. The "principle" is all, even if it entails only giving lip-service to an internationalist ideology. Who gets the money, and for what? Too many of the Third World recipients—like the donors—also hate poverty but exploitation and man's inhumanity to man, and proceed to plan for nothing so much as precisely that. High time that one of the mythologies of our epoch was subjected to critical analysis! M.J.L.

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1. The Act of Faith

"As with other articles of faith, however, once accepted, certain consequences, which must also be accepted, flow from it. The most important is the obligation of every government to play its part in cooperation with all others to ensure that all *people have a reasonable chance to share in the resources of the world. . . . We live at a time when the ability to transform the world is only limited by faintness of heart or narrowness of vision."*

Partners in Development; Report of the Commission on International Development (Pearson Report, N.Y., 1969)

"If one per cent, in total, is the present target, what is wrong with two per cent? And why should not the developed countries be compelled not merely by shame but by enlightened self-interest to channel increasing proportions of their foreign aid through the multi-national institutions now operating in this field?"

Nature
(26 May 1972)

THE CASE FOR FOREIGN AID is usually taken for granted. The results of aid and the conduct of recipient governments are rarely discussed, and then only in the most cursory fashion. The case for foreign aid is regarded as axiomatic, so that either progress or lack of progress can be used to argue for more aid. Progress is evidence of success, and lack of progress is evidence that more must be done. It is usually assumed that giving more aid means doing better, that more aid is more meritorious. In the literature "increase" and "improvement" are interchangeable terms, as in the following passage from an official OECD report:

> In these GNP terms, the biggest *increases* were made by Sweden, Portugal and Denmark, France, with the United Kingdom also doing quite well. Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway and the United States also *improved* their performance, the latter despite their well-publicised difficulties in increasing aid appropriations. . . . What are the prospects for a continuation of this modest *improvement* in the levels of official development assistance?[1]

Whatever happens, progress or failure becomes an argument for more aid. But then evidence has always been irrelevant to an act of faith.

Furthermore, the burden of proof has somehow come to be placed on the critics instead of the advocates. As aid involves the transfer of money to governments and international organisations over whom the representatives elected by the taxpayers in the donor countries have no control, this seems particularly anomalous. Until well after World War II it was an important principle in the allocation of even modest grants to British colonial governments that they should go to governments for whose conduct the Secretary of State for the Colonies was answerable to Parliament.[2]

At about £275 million per year British aid now exceeds by more than one third the total British contribution to the European Economic Community plus all other expenditure on external relations; it is equal to the yield of surtax and twice that of betting and gaming taxes; and it is about one quarter of the expected balance of payments deficit for 1973.

Aid, nevertheless, remains the only category of government spending which goes unquestioned (except for suggestions that it should be higher). Spending on such traditional, necessary, or popular items as the monarchy, defence, education, national health or school milk has at times been criticised, but not foreign aid. This unquestioning attitude has prevailed for well over a decade, through periods of substantial restriction on state and private spending in general, and on overseas investment and travel in particular.

2. Patronising Attitudes

"Rapid economic development of the poor countries is essential if we are to create a world in which people world wide can lead lives free of the fears of starvation, disease, deprivation and war. But I am convinced that such a world will not come into existence unless the rich countries take the development business far more seriously in the future than we have in the past. At this stage it is extremely doubtful that the poor countries can develop by themselves at rates which are truly commensurate with need."

Dr Harrison Brown,
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists
(June 1971)

WHEN AID ENTHUSIASTS bother to argue their case at all, their statements are often so vague and shifting that they cannot be pinned down. Thus, according to an official expression of opinion in *Public Expenditure to 1976-77:*

> In the distribution of the aid programme, the government takes account of long-standing relationships such as those with the Commonwealth; but it is also seeking new directions, and the make-up of the programme reflects a wide and complex range of developmental, political and economic considerations. (*Cmnd 5178*, 1972)

A statement so vapid is inevitably proof against substantive criticism.

Aid advocates often say that aid is indispensable for the development of the recipient countries, or that it is necessary to relieve poverty or even

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[1] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Development Cooperation 1972: efforts and policies of the members of the Development Assistance Committee* (Paris, 1972), italics added.

[2] The increasing amount of aid channelled through the international agencies gradually severs all links between donors and recipients. It also means that, at one remove, British aid supports governments which do not receive British aid directly. For instance, in 1973 new UN aid projects were approved for Uganda —after the mass expulsion of Asians. Analogous considerations apply even to bilateral aid. Britain may come eventually not to give any aid to Uganda—but then British aid to other countries sets free resources of other donors to grant aid to Uganda.

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to avert starvation. These statements are merely unsubstantiated assertions. Moreover, promotion of development and relief of poverty are also quite different arguments for aid. Alms to a beggar or charity to an invalid differs materially from scholarships to promising young people, or from loans for their training or for setting up in business. The purpose of the help, its likely duration, the criteria of its allocation, and the likely results all differ substantially. Promotion of development and relief of poverty are thus altogether different. But neither provides a worthwhile economic argument for official aid.[3]

Foreign aid is patently not necessary to emerge from poverty. Many poor countries and regions progressed rapidly before foreign aid was ever heard of—Mexico (and a number of other Latin American countries), West Africa, South-east Asia, Hong Kong, and many others. Some of these areas have been largely transformed in a few decades. In the 1890s Malaya was a sparsely populated country of small hamlets and fishing villages; by the 1930s it had developed into a country with substantial cities, thriving commerce, and an excellent system of roads, largely the result of the emergence of the rubber industry. In 1900 slavery, slave-raiding, and local wars were still widespread or endemic in the areas of Northern Nigeria which have now become centres of the groundnut trade. And the present developed countries progressed without external gifts, usually in much more difficult conditions than those which now face poor countries (for these have access to skills and technology developed elsewhere, and to huge markets and varied sources of supply abroad).

To say that the peoples of poor countries desperately want material progress but cannot achieve it without alms or gifts from us is unconscionably patronising.[4] Indeed, a patronising attitude pervades the whole discussion on aid. We are supposed to have caused the poverty of less developed countries in the Third World through exploitation, which is obviously untrue (the poorest have few or no external contacts and the most prosperous are those with which the West has established contact), but our gifts are still supposed to be indispensable for their advance. Whatever happens to them is supposed to depend on us, which makes us feel superior even as we express feelings of guilt. We go on in our patronising way by calling the recipients of hand-outs partners in progress, as if they were children unaware of simple realities.

Aid is clearly not necessary for progress, nor is it sufficient. If the personal and social conditions of material progress (capacities, motivations, mores, and institutions) are not present, aid will be ineffective. What holds back many poor countries is the people who live there, including their governments. A society which cannot develop without external gifts is altogether unlikely to do so with them.

The argument of the aid lobbies that aid is indispensable for development faces an inescapable dilemma. If the conditions for development other than capital are present, capital will be generated locally or supplied to governments or to business commercially from abroad. If the required conditions are not present, aid will be unproductive and therefore ineffective. Where the mainsprings of progress are present, material progress will come about without foreign aid. Where they are absent, no amount of aid will help.

3. *What Determines Development?*

"Looking at the turn given to the human spirit in England by political life; seeing the Englishman, certain of the support of his laws, relying on himself and unaware of any obstacle except the limit of his own powers, acting without constraint; seeing him, inspired by the sense that he can do anything, look restlessly at what now is, always in search of the best; seeing him like that, I am in no hurry to inquire whether nature has scooped out ports for him, and given him coal and iron. The reason for his commercial prosperity is not there at all: it is in himself."

Alexis de Tocqueville,
Journeys to England and Ireland (1833)

AN ECONOMY consists of people whose performance determines its material achievement. Economic achievement depends primarily on people's aptitudes and attitudes (*e.g.*, interest in material success) and their social institutions and political arrangements (*e.g.*, in encouraging people to take long views). Societies, groups, and individuals differ widely in these matters. Contrary to what might be inferred from so much "development literature," humanity is not an undifferentiated mass whose components differ only in conventionally measured incomes. Differences in these human determinants largely account for differences in economic achievement and rates of progress. External contacts, market opportunities, and natural resources play a part, but a much less important one; and, again, their effective use depends on personal and social factors.

Investible resources are much less significant; and both their supply and their productivity depend on the personal and social factors already mentioned; in the development process investible

[3] Foreign aid is often envisaged simply as a discharge of the moral duty to help the less fortunate. This idea can be examined appropriately only after considering the results of aid. It is discussed in section 10 below.

[4] The bulk of Western foreign aid is in outright grants. The rest is very soft loans, of which the grant element is mostly well over half the total.

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funds are at least as much a result as a cause. The volume of such funds was relatively unimportant in the material progress of many societies. And the historical phenomenon of economic decline would be inexplicable if material progress depended on the capital available.

Economic development thus depends on personal and social factors, not on handouts. Foreign aid means at most that some capital is cheaper than if it had been raised independently at market rates. This is very different from saying that it is indispensable for progress.

The belief that external gifts are necessary for the progress of poor countries (or the so-called Third World, a phrase which is often ambivalent and almost always misleading but is perhaps unavoidable), leads to completely open-ended commitments by aid donors. The Pearson Report proposed that sufficient funds should be provided to ensure an average growth rate of 6% in the less developed world by the end of the century. As such a rate of growth could not possibly depend solely on external gifts, the proposal implies an unlimited commitment.

4. Infrastructure & Private Investment

IN THE 1972 House of Commons debate on aid Mr Wood asserted that official aid obviously had certain characteristics which made it indispensable for development; but it was Mrs Judith Hart, his opposite number, who attempted to spell out the reasons. Aid was indispensable, she said, because private capital could not finance the "infrastructure" necessary for development such as roads, power supplies, and schools ("the private investors cannot finance infrastructure"); because many poor countries were too small for profitable investment ("private investment demands markets for what it produces and this necessarily means that it does not go to the poorest countries"); because private investment was unpredictable ("private investment is unpredictable and cannot be taken into account in formulating development plans"). Although these frequently-heard arguments are rather more specific than Mr Wood's empty assertion, they are quite invalid.

Private investment may indeed fail to finance some parts of the infrastructure.[5] But the government can always borrow abroad for this purpose and service the loans from higher tax revenues, as used to be standard practice. Moreover, infrastructure is not a pre-condition of development but a collection of facilities which emerge in the course of material progress.

Contrary to Mrs Hart's assertion, the small size of the domestic market does not preclude private investment. Whatever the size of the market, if the required conditions (other than capital) are present investment will be generated locally or supplied commercially from abroad. Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Israel, and a number of Latin American countries are among the most obvious examples. Mrs Hart gave Uganda as an example of a small country unable to secure private capital. In fact the country had no such difficulties until recently when its governments became increasingly hostile to private capital.[6]

The flow of private investment may well be unpredictable, notably so when the political climate is hostile to private capital, especially foreign capital. But the flow of aid is also uncertain; and development planning (which is in any case not a precondition of progress) should take account of these fluctuations.

5. Repercussions

AID IS AN INFLOW of subsidised or *gratis* resources, and in this sense enriches the recipients. But unlike manna from heaven, it does not descend indiscriminately on everybody. It sets up a whole variety of damaging repercussions, and these have to be taken into account.

1. Official aid reinforces the disastrous tendency to politicise life in poor countries, the trend towards *politique d'abord*. This tendency operates even without aid, but is buttressed and intensified by it. The hand-outs increase the power, resources, and patronage of governments compared to the rest of society; and this is exacerbated by the more favourable treatment of governments which try to establish state-controlled economies. Many Third World governments, especially in Africa, could not operate their close economic controls without expatriate staffs, employed under various aid programmes. Politicisation of life provokes political tension because it becomes supremely important, often a matter of life and death, who has the power—witness Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zaire (the Congo). This politicisation diverts the attention, energies, and activities of able and enterprising people from economic activity to politics and

[5] As a matter of fact much infrastructure in less developed countries (*ldcs*) has been financed and operated privately until recently and often still is, as for instance, transport enterprises and utilities, and sometimes even roads, schools and hospitals established by plantation and mining enterprises.

[6] Mrs Hart quoted a Uganda spokesman in support of her allegations: "Yet we do not succeed in attracting private investors. Why don't we succeed? Because we cannot offer the markets. We are too small a country to be interesting to the private investor. . . ."
This is untrue: there was, until recently, substantial Asian and European investment in that country.

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administration, sometimes from choice (because this diversion is profitable), but quite often from necessity (because economic or even physical survival comes to depend on political developments and administrative decisions).

2. Besides politicising life and thereby contributing to social and political tension, official aid similarly reinforces the pursuit of policies damaging to material progress (and often also inhuman). Many recipient governments restrict the activities of highly productive and economically successful minorities—Chinese in Indonesia, Asians in Africa, Indians in Burma, Europeans everywhere. And many have also maltreated and persecuted politically ineffective groups, especially ethnic minorities. Such policies reduce current and prospective incomes in these countries, and widen income differences between them and the West. Even where it does not promote economic advance, aid represents current resources accruing to the governments, resources which are available for the purchase of imports or for the distribution of largesse, so that it helps governments temporarily to conceal from their own people some of the economic consequences of their actions.

3. Aid often supports extremely wasteful projects which make large losses year after year, and which can absorb more local resources than the value of their output. For political reasons such hopeless projects often have to be continued for years after it has become plain that they are thoroughly wasteful.[7]

4. Aid is often linked to balance-of-payments deficits of the recipients, especially when these deficits are considered as the results of laudable official efforts to speed up progress. Balance-of-payments crises in the course of development planning are especially useful in supporting appeals for aid; governments of poor countries are understandably encouraged to embark on ambitious plans involving large expenditures financed by inflationary monetary and fiscal policies, and also to run down their foreign-exchange reserves. Inflationary policies, payments difficulties, and the detailed economic controls which they promote, all engender a widespread feeling of insecurity or even a crisis atmosphere, a sequence which inhibits domestic saving and investment and even promotes a flight of capital. These sequences, in turn, serve as arguments for further external assistance.

5. The insistence on the need for external assistance obscures the necessity for the people of poor countries themselves to develop the facilities, attitudes, and institutions which are required if these societies are to achieve sustained substantial material progress. Indeed, this insistence on external aid helps to perpetuate the ideas and attitudes widespread in these countries, which are damaging to economic progress: that opportunities and resources for advance of oneself and one's family must come from someone else—the state, the rulers, one's superiors, richer people or foreigners. In this sense aid pauperises those it purports to assist.

6. Aid frequently influences policies into inappropriate directions by promoting unsuitable external models, such as Western-type universities whose graduates cannot get jobs, Western-style trade unions which are only vehicles for the self-advancement of politicians, and a Western pattern of industry even where quite inappropriate (*e.g.* national airlines and steelworks).[8]

7. Aid is money which could be used more productively in the donor countries (or, at any rate, by their citizens), so that it reduces the combined national incomes of donors and recipients. It also retards the material advance of the donors by affecting adversely their own balance-of-payments; and payments difficulties in donor countries have often brought about restrictive domestic economic policies—with adverse effects on the Third World's export markets.

8. As a result of the operation of various sectional interests, the most important donor countries erect substantial barriers against the exports from the less developed countries to whom they are giving aid. Foreign aid unfortunately diminishes the political resistance in the recipient countries to the erection of these barriers, both within the donor countries and by spokesmen of recipient countries.

ALL THESE ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS (and the list could easily be extended), even when taken together, do not mean that foreign aid cannot promote development. But it is certainly unwarranted to assume that it must do so simply because it represents an inflow of subsidised resources. Aid may well improve current economic conditions in the recipient countries.

[7] This consideration applies not only to industrial ventures and other familiar prestige projects, but often also to agricultural schemes. For instance, some years ago Tanzania received substantial amounts of bush clearing equipment under a Yugoslav aid scheme. The equipment was designed for use in temperate climates. The attempt to keep it going rather ineffectively in Tanzania absorbed large amounts of labour and scarce water for cooling. Protracted pressure by external advisers was required before the government agreed to abandon the equipment. (The episode bears some resemblance to the celebrated "groundnut scheme" of the late 1940s in the same area.)

[8] See Harry Johnson's critical account of the general Western intellectual misconceptions which helped to form the "Afro-Asian" ideology: "A Word to the Third World", ENCOUNTER, October 1971.

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But the contribution of aid to long-term development is at best marginal. It means that some investible funds are available more cheaply than would be the case otherwise. These funds are likely to be less productive than capital supplied commercially since their use cannot be adjusted so readily to market conditions including supplies of complementary factors. And when capital is productive, it will usually be generated locally or be readily available from abroad on commercial terms.

Moreover, the crucial personal and social determinants of development are apt to be affected adversely by the repercussions of the inflow of aid. These adverse repercussions are likely to offset, or more than offset, the benefits from the inflow of subsidised investible funds in otherwise propitious circumstances. There is, therefore, not even a general presumption that aid is more likely to promote development rather than retard it. As it has operated in the past and as it is likely to operate in the foreseeable future, any general presumption would tend to be in the very opposite direction.[9]

6. Aid as an Axiom

THE AXIOMATIC TREATMENT of aid is also reflected in its terminology. Thus the very name of the Overseas Development Administration prejudges the results of its operations. It should be called the Overseas Donations Administration, which would appropriately describe its activities. A terminology directed towards description rather than prediction (or hope) would also more nearly conform to the usual practice of government departments. The same comment goes for the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. In the last year or two the term "foreign aid" has come to be increasingly replaced by the term "development finance" to describe what is plainly a system of doles.

Aid lobbyists often insist that neither the culture, the social institutions, nor the policies of the recipient governments should be criticised. But what if these are incompatible with substantial material progress? Material advance requires a modernisation of the mind, and this is inhibited by many of the mores and institutions of the poor countries.

Some aid lobbyists do suggest at times that recipient governments should be persuaded to adopt different policies, such as the adoption of "comprehensive planning" or the expropriation of politically unpopular and ineffective groups, or both. But such measures are not calculated to promote development. The success of specific projects financed by aid is often publicised without enquiry into the cost in terms of alternative use of the resources, or into the possibility of financing the project from sources other than aid.[10] And when changes in the national income of aid-recipients are occasionally discussed, the enquiry does not extend to the meaning or limitations of the underlying statistics (an issue to which I shall return shortly) or to the relation between statistical growth and general living standards, or to the problem of establishing a causal relationship between the inflow of aid and the rate of development, or to the question why aid should be necessary if investment in the recipient countries is indeed genuinely productive.

7. The Relief of Poverty

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS the aid lobbies have changed their emphasis from development to the relief of poverty. If the advocacy has become much more strident, it is perhaps because the new emphasis on "need" itself implicitly recognises the previous failure of aid as an instrument for "development."

[9] "Marshall Aid" is often quoted as a precedent for the development possibilities of aid. But the analogy is false. The economies of Western Europe had to be restored, while those of the present recipients have to be developed. The peoples of Western Europe had the faculties, motivations, and institutions for centuries before the second World War. The rapid return to prosperity in Western Europe and the ending of Marshall Aid after four years—even though West Germany had to absorb many millions of refugees (among whom old people and children were disproportionately represented) and also had to make substantial reparation payments to the Soviet Union—contrast sharply with the quasi-permanent flow of aid to the Third World.

[10] If "development" has any meaning as a desirable process, it must mean an increase in the volume of goods and services desired by the population. It should not be related simply to the growth of particular sectors and activities (say, the public sector, or manufacturing output, or the output of capital goods), or simply to the output of arbitrarily chosen goods and services unrelated to present or prospective consumer demand. The neglect of these considerations explains the paradox of the acute shortage of simple consumer goods (razor blades, stockings, clothing, not to speak of consumer durables) in countries whose official statistics record impressive growth rates.

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Poverty is said to be indicated by comparison of per capita incomes, coupled with references to hunger, famine, and starvation and the alleged "ever-widening gap between the haves and have-nots." These arguments are even less substantial than earlier ones for aid as an instrument for development. Here are some of the reasons why this is so:

1. The statistics of income per head in less developed countries are quite useless for international comparison and for the measurement of need. Professor Dan Usher (a Canadian statistician who lived for years in South-east Asia and who has a Thai wife), has written pertinently on this subject. The following passages from the introduction and summary of his book *The Price Mechanism and the Meaning of National Income Statistics* (Oxford, 1968) epitomise his conclusions.

> Using Thailand as an example this book shows that statistics like these may contain errors of several hundred per cent . . . the discrepancy is not due primarily to errors in data . . . the fault lies with the rules [of national income comparisons] themselves . . . [which] generate numbers that fail to carry the implications expected of them.
>
> In Thailand I saw a people not prosperous by European standards but obviously enjoying a standard of living well above the bare requirements of subsistence. Many village communities seemed to have attained a standard of material comfort at least as high as that of slum dwellers in England or America. But at my desk I computed statistics of real national income showing people of underdeveloped countries including Thailand to be desperately if not impossibly poor. The contrast between what I saw and what I measured was so great that I came to believe that there must be some large and fundamental bias in the way income statistics are compiled. Something is very wrong with these statistics. For instance, if the figure of $40 for Ethiopia means what it appears to mean, namely that Ethiopians are consuming per year an amount of goods and services no larger than could be bought in the United States for $40 then most Ethiopians are so poor that they could not possibly survive let alone increase in numbers.

These observations are clearly pertinent, not only to the case for foreign aid as an instrument for the relief of poverty but to a much wider range of problems. Conceptual and statistical problems apart, there are also frequent instances of deliberate manipulation of national income statistics and similar data for political purposes (as has been noted by Professor Oskar Morgenstern to whom I will refer later). Even the population statistics of the Third World (which underlie per capita incomes) are subject to wide margins of error. Thus, the 1963 census put the population of Nigeria at 55·6 million while a prominent American scholar of Nigerian affairs estimated it at 37·1 million for the same year. All this should put into perspective the value of statistics which purport to estimate changes in Afro-Asian per capita incomes to within one or two per cent. Yet such estimates feature prominently in the advocacy of aid.

2. Foreign aid is paid by governments to governments. Unlike voluntary charity (or for that matter domestic progressive taxation), it cannot take into account differences in incomes and conditions of families and persons. Indeed, it operates perversely. The poorest are largely untouched by aid, as for instance desert people in Africa and Asia, aborigines in South-east Asia, Africa and Latin America, and various other backward groups, categories which total many millions. (Even the presence of these groups is rarely acknowledged in aid discussions which all too often ignore the diversity of the less developed world and tend to envisage it as a largely undifferentiated, uniform mass.) Much of aid only benefits the urban population, among whom the more articulate, influential, educated, skilled and enterprising people are disproportionately represented (notably, politicians, civil servants, academics and urban businessmen).

There are also substantial classes of beneficiaries of official aid in the donor countries (exporters, consultants, civil servants, and academics). An important class of beneficiary is the staff members of the international agencies, both from rich and poor countries, who alone pay no taxes and thus contribute nothing to the foreign aid they advocate so warmly. The taxes which go to finance aid are levied on the whole population in the donor countries, including the poorest.

3. Quite apart from these various statistical and conceptual problems and from the uncertain distributive effects of aid, evident anomalies or absurdities result from the uncritical adoption of need as a ground for aid, especially need as conventionally measured by per capita income. The maltreatment and expulsion of minorities by aid recipients, already mentioned, provides an instructive example. These minorities have been the main agents of economic progress in these countries, and their incomes were above the average. Hence their elimination necessarily reduces per capita incomes. Should aid be increased because these policies have directly reduced per capita incomes and thus aggravated need? And should it be increased yet again if this

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encourages further maltreatment and expulsions?[11]

There are also many societies where the local attitudes, aptitudes, and institutions are such that aid (especially government-to-government aid) can do little or nothing to relieve need—either because the official machinery will ensure that it does not reach the needy, or because aid promotes policies which aggravate poverty, or because the attitudes of the people themselves may largely resist improvements in their material conditions.

8. The Widening Gap

"Over 1,500,000,000 people, something like two-thirds of the world's population, are living in conditions of acute hunger, defined in terms of identifiable nutritional disease. This hunger is at the same time the effect and the cause of the poverty, squalor, and misery in which they live."

HAROLD WILSON,
The War on World Poverty (1953)

"It is on the ethical plane that the present situation is scandalous. One third of the world lives in comfort and two thirds in misery."

JOHN PINCUS,
Trade, Aid and Development (1967)

"The widening gap between the developed and developing countries has become a central issue of our time."

Partners in Development
(Pearson Report, 1969)

THREE FURTHER VARIANTS of the general argument for aid deserve to be noted: the population explosion; large-scale starvation; and the widening gap.

The rapid growth of population in the Third World (the so-called population explosion) does not rescue the conventional arguments for aid. For it reflects a fall in mortality, a longer life-expectation of both infants and adults, *i.e.* some improvement in basic conditions. This improvement is omitted in conventional statistics of per capita incomes, as they do not recognise health, life-expectation and the possession of children as components of living standards.

It is often asserted that without foreign aid there would be widespread starvation in the Third World. These countries are supposed to be living at below-subsistence levels and under persistent threat of starvation, while at the same time alarm is expressed at the growth of their populations—a paradox which is seldom noticed. If there is not enough food for the existing population, there could be no large-scale increase in numbers. Much aid directly or indirectly finances uneconomic enterprises or activities which produce neither food nor exports to purchase it.

The widening gap is another plausible but insubstantial argument for aid. To begin with, the argument again prejudges the effects of aid by implying that aid promotes the long-term improvement in living standards in poor countries. Aid certainly removes resources from the donors; but this does not mean that it improves incomes or living standards of the recipients. To make the rich poorer does not make the poor richer. The impact of aid on differences in income and living standards cannot be judged without examining the factors behind these differences and also the likely effects of aid in specific instances.

The concept of the so-called gap is vague to a degree. There is continuous gradation and no clear gap or discontinuity in the international range of per capita incomes. The distinction between what are called rich and poor countries on the basis of per capita incomes depends simply on where the line between the two categories is drawn; and in the absence of clear discontinuity this is quite arbitrary. Consequently the difference in per capita incomes between the two categories is similarly arbitrary. Moreover, many Afro-Asian lands in recent years have developed much faster than most rich countries—South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Kenya, the Ivory Coast, Nigeria, as well as some Latin American countries. The oil states of the Middle East (usually included in the less developed world) have per capita incomes among the highest in the world. Thus the difference in conventionally measured per capita incomes between some of these countries and many developed countries has narrowed and not widened in recent years or decades. The arbitrary and crude aggregation of the developed and less developed world conceals far-reaching differences within these aggregates, including differences in material prosperity and rates of progress.

[11] It is sometimes suggested that these expulsions need not greatly obstruct development because technical assistance personnel can replace the groups expelled from the aid-recipient countries. Quite apart from the moral and political implications of this kind of reasoning, the suggestion is unfounded.

Technical assistance personnel do not usually possess the relevant commercial, administrative or even technical skills; and even when they do, they lack the experience and local knowledge. A large proportion of technical assistance personnel is quite inexperienced. They are certainly no effective replacement for the thousands of traders, industrialists and farmers with decades of local experience.

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When referring to international income differences and to the widening gap, aid advocates often suggest that the higher income of the West has been somehow secured at the expense of the Third World. This has been a familiar theme of Marxist and Leninist pamphlets, and of the arguments of so-called Third World politicians. In recent years it has increasingly found its way into the advocacy of aid.

These allegations are quite without substance. The poorest societies in the less developed world are those with the fewest (or no) external economic contacts, so that their poverty cannot be the result of deprivation by external powers. Conversely, those involved in extensive foreign trade are the most prosperous. Obvious examples are Malaysia and Ghana, not to speak of the oil-producing countries. The material prosperity of Western societies and of Japan is the achievement of their own people, whose activities have also promoted such economic advance as has taken place in the Third World. But the advocacy of aid is presumably made easier by suggesting the contrary.

9. Indebtedness & International Trade

"We shall produce any statistic that we think will help us to get as much money out of the United States as we possibly can. Statistics which we do not have, but which we need to justify our demands, we will simply fabricate."

Unnamed civil servant, quoted in O. Morgenstern, *On the Accuracy of Economic Observations* (1963)

"The foreign earnings of the developing countries have suffered severely from the deterioration in terms of trade. Unless these countries succeed in obtaining additional resources, they will be unable to achieve the reasonable rate of growth set as a target in their plans. The situation will be worse still if the terms of trade deteriorate further in the future."

Towards A New Trade Policy For Economic Development, United Nations (1964)

"Between 1960 and 1969 exports from developing countries grew at the rate of 9·5 per cent. If we look in the same period at the primary commodities on which many of the developing countries, and particularly the poorest, depend completely—if we exclude oil, which benefits only a tiny number of highly privileged countries—we find that the export of primary commodities grew at the rate of only 2·5 per cent."

Judith Hart, *Hansard* (27 April 1972)

THE BURDEN of indebtedness and the alleged deterioration of the position of the Third World in world trade are often-heard subsidiary arguments for aid, straddling the promotion of development and the relief of need. They are major themes of the proceedings of international organisations, and are widely reported and discussed in the so-called quality press. These notions, though insubstantial, are worth examining both because they are so widely canvassed and because they show up the regrettable lack of understanding (or scruple) in the advocacy of aid.

The indebtedness of many less developed countries is often instanced as an argument for additional aid. Most of these debts reflect soft loans, usually with large grant elements, incurred under earlier aid agreements, often supplemented by outright grants. With the world-wide rise in prices (especially of aid-recipients' export prices, particularly in 1972–73), the real burden even of these soft loans had diminished greatly. The inability to service these loans suggests that they have been wasted, and have not increased incomes or taxable capacity.[12] This waste of earlier aid now becomes an argument for more of it. It is the donors who are held responsible for failures to service even heavily subsidised loans, and who are made to feel guilty for "draining away" the foreign exchange resources of the Third World.

The so-called deterioration of the external trade position of less developed countries as an argument for aid takes two forms: a decline in their share in world trade, and deterioration in their terms of trade. The allegations are either untrue, or irrelevant, or both.

Why does the whole discussion usually ignore exports of mineral oil? Oil was excluded in the oft-quoted U.N. publication *Towards a New Trade Policy for Economic Development* (the Prebisch Report) which set the tone of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) of which Dr Prebisch became Secretary-General. Yet oil is by far the most important export from the Third World, worth well over double that of any other export, and

[12] Ghana, a substantial aid beneficiary of many years standing, provides an instructive example. Dr Nkrumah had at his disposal huge sums of money, largely from the operation of the state's export monopoly of cocoa. These funds, amounting to hundreds of millions of pounds, served as the major financial base for his political operations as well as for large-scale personal spending by himself and his political allies, and also for indiscriminate public spending. The economic usefulness of the huge expenditure of the Nkrumah government can be gauged from the fact that after the rapid expenditure of the large reserves of the Gold Coast–Ghana export monopolies and of current cocoa revenues, and in spite of many years of acute dearth of consumer goods in the country, the government incurred debts on which it had to default.

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the value of mineral oil exports has increased phenomenally since World War II. The omission is usually justified on the ground that oil exports benefit only a handful of countries with tiny populations and rulers who are not interested in the benefit of their peoples. This was specifically stated by Mrs Hart in a House of Commons debate on 27 April 1972, in the course of which she complained about Third World difficulties allegedly caused by external factors; and she instanced the damage to exporters of copper, especially Chile, resulting from a fall in the copper price (from a very high level). In fact, some of the oil exporters are rather large countries: Nigeria, Iran, and Iraq.[13] The population of Nigeria is about five times that of Chile and substantially exceeds the combined total of all copper-exporting Third World countries. The population of Iran is also much larger than that of any copper-exporting poor country. In any case, the character of the governments of exporting countries is irrelevant to a discussion of external trade, (though as it happens the governments of several oil-exporting countries pursue policies which are nowadays often regarded as progressive, *viz.* expropriation of property, hostility towards the prosperous, and maltreatment of ethnic minorities).

The decline in the share of a country or group of countries in world trade has no adverse welfare implications and is not evidence of adverse external conditions. For instance, since the 1950s the large increase in the foreign trade of Japan, the reconstruction of Europe and the liberalisation of intra-European trade have brought about a decline in the share of other groups in world trade, including that of the United States and the United Kingdom (the external trade of which has grown proportionately less than that of western Europe and Japan). Exports from a country or group of countries often decline as a result of increased domestic use of previously exported products (Nigerian groundnuts and palm oil, Indian groundnuts); or the intensification of protectionist policies of their governments; or domestic inflation; or special taxation of exporters (Burma rice). A decline in the share of a group of countries in external trade is no evidence whatever of unfavourable external developments. As it happens, the share of less developed countries in world trade has not decreased, but has increased in recent decades, notably since before World War I.

Allegations about the persistent deterioration in the terms of trade of less developed countries or primary producers (these categories are often treated as if they were interchangeable) are, again, meaningless, or untrue, and usually both. The lack of similarity in the trading patterns of the Third World (which compromises well over half of the world) makes aggregation of their terms of trade practically meaningless. The terms of trade of individual countries and even of groups of countries often move in opposite directions. In any case the terms of trade (the ratio of import and export prices) even of individual poor countries are of practically no interest if they relate to more than a very short period—unless changes in the cost of production of exports, and in the range and quality of imports and in the volume of trade, are also considered. What matters is the amount of imports which can be purchased with a unit of domestic resources or a specified volume of resources; and this cannot be inferred from the ratio of import and export prices. (In technical language: the comparisons relevant to economic welfare and development are the factoral terms or the income terms of trade, not the commodity terms of trade.) Moreover, the proportion of export earnings retained in poor countries has risen substantially in recent years as a result of major increases in corporation taxes and royalty rates. Even the crude commodity terms of these countries have been exceptionally favourable in recent years. When changes in the cost of production, the great improvement in the range and quality of imports available and the huge increase in the volume of trade are taken into account, the external purchasing power of their exports, of *ldcs* whether per unit of resources or in the aggregate, is now extremely favourable, probably more so than ever before.[14]

These observations should not come as a surprise. It was Sir Arthur Lewis who said this a few years ago:

> The terms of trade for primary as against manufactured products averaged higher in the 1950s than at any time in the preceding eighty years. The first half of the 1950s was especially good because of the Korean war and heavy stock-piling in the United States and elsewhere. The terms of trade deteriorated in the second half of the decade and on till 1962, since when they have moved upwards. However, even in 1962 they were 5 per cent above 1929, which preceded the Great Depression.[15]

This was written before the recent upsurge in primary product prices and does not take into

[13] Incidentally, the oil states derided by Mrs Hart do receive Western aid, including British aid.

[14] For political reasons many Third World governments often rely on high-cost imports; but this does not affect the argument although it shows that the terms of trade are not outside the control of these governments.

[15] W. Arthur Lewis, "A Review of Economic Development" (Richard T. Ely Lecture at the 75th Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association 1964), published in the *American Economic Review* (May 1965).

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account the various favourable factors noted in the previous paragraph.

Moreover, because of the certain further increase in world population, the virtually certain technical progress in manufacturing, and the virtually certain increase in total world income, it is probably that the terms of trade of countries which produce mineral and agricultural products for export will improve. This probability, incidentally, underlies the irony of much current discussion—which predicts a world shortage of food and simultaneously urges developing countries to divert resources away from agriculture and towards manufacturing.

10. The Morality of Aid

"Could the moral and social foundations of their own societies remain firm and steady if they washed their hands of the plight of others?"
Partners in Development
(Pearson Report, 1969)

THE BELIEF THAT FOREIGN AID is the discharge of a moral obligation to help the poor is perhaps the most influential argument—or, rather, emotion—behind the advocacy of aid in popular discussion. I thought it appropriate to postpone discussion of this argument until after consideration of the more technical or systematic arguments for aid and of its major results and implications, since a worthwhile assessment of the morality of aid must be affected by its results.

The suggestion that aid represents the discharge of moral duty is usually based on the poverty of the Third World as compared to the West. However, this argument prejudges the effects of aid by taking it for granted that aid is bound to raise living standards in the recipient countries. I have shown that this belief is quite unwarranted. I have noted also that the standard international income comparisons bandied about in this context are worthless, and further that much of aid venefits the relatively well-off in the recipient countries and leaves the poorest untouched or even affects them adversely. Nor is this all. Foreign aid often facilitates the pursuit of measures which provoke or exacerbate political tension, increase the flow of refugees, and thus promote much suffering and human misery.

The conduct of many aid-recipient governments in the Third World clearly offends the most elementary moral principles. The expulsion of tens of thousands of Asians from Uganda is only the most widely publicised and, therefore, the most familiar instance. Large-scale maltreatment of minorities, including expropriation and expulsion, has taken place since World War II in many aid-receiving countries, including Burma, Burundi, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Sudan, Tanzania and Zaire. In some of these countries there have been large-scale massacres.

Many of the aid lobbyists seem to be sublimely uninterested in the social results of aid, or in the policies it buttresses. Morality appears to be satisfied as long as the donors are made to feel guilty and are divested of a goodly portion of their resources.

The argument that aid is the discharge of moral duty to help the poor is open to a further objection; and to some it may even be more fundamental. The implicit analogy between foreign aid and the morality of voluntary charity fails. Foreign aid is taxpayers' money—the donors have to pay whether they like it or not. By and large they do not even know that they do in fact contribute to aid. Aid lobbyists do not give away their own money. They propose taxes on others. The moral obligation to help one's fellow man rests on persons who are prepared to make sacrifices. It cannot be discharged by entities such as governments.

Foreign aid also differs from voluntary charity in various other ways. For instance, unlike voluntary action it cannot easily be directed to the specific needs of groups or persons, since it is distributed to governments and not to voluntary organisations or to individuals.

The few people in poor countries who know about aid sense that it differs radically from voluntary charity. This is one reason why they suspect statements about its alleged humanitarian quality.

11. Enlightened Self-Interest

THE ARGUMENTS AND SENTIMENTS in favour of aid usually focus on the needs of the recipients. But aid is often said to benefit donors on the ground that it promotes political strategy or develops export markets.

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1. In spite of these suggestions, the Western donors no longer envisage aid as an instrument of political strategy or for the promotion of a more secure world. In this they are quite right. Aid can hardly serve to promote the security of the donors. It reduces their resources and, to that extent, weakens their position. Moreover, it is only materially developed countries that can imperil the security of the donors. In the unlikely event of aid substantially promoting the material development of the recipient countries, this would improve their military potential. This outcome would enable them to become a threat to the donors, which at present they are not. The military and technical resources of less developed countries are too meagre to enable them to endanger the security of the donors (with the exception of mainland China, a country not usually considered in this context).

Does one still have to cite any specific examples to show that the granting of aid has not actually promoted the political interests of the Western donors? The recipients usually resent the Western donors, and find it satisfying to assert their independence, a stance which is often useful for both domestic and external political reasons. The indiscriminate distribution of Western millions understandably arouses suspicion, especially of political domination. Again, the feelings of guilt in the West make the recipients believe that aid is at best a partial restitution for past wrongs. It is, therefore, not surprising that the recipients find regular occasions to abuse and embarrass the Western donors. The recent statements of General Amin are only one example. Similar sentiments have come from the present and past leaders of Algeria, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Tanzania, the United Arab Republic, and Zambia. And when the governments of India and Pakistan sought external mediation in the Kashmir dispute (1965), they turned to the Soviet Union although they had for years been receiving much US and UK aid.

2. Aid cannot provide markets for exports, since exports bought with aid are given away. This benefits donors as little as a shopkeeper would benefit from being burgled because the thief may spend part of the proceeds in his shop. The suggestion that aid benefits donors through the long-term development of the recipients anticipates the success of aid. It also ignores that alternative and more productive uses of resources exist within the donor countries and elsewhere. This consideration is reinforced by the inability of the recipients to service even very soft loans. The low productivity of aid compared to alternative uses implies a reduction in the rate of growth of the combined incomes of donors and recipients, so that in the long run the supply of investible funds will be less than it would otherwise have been.

12. Curiouser & Curiouser

THE BEHAVIOUR IN RECENT YEARS of both donor and recipient countries has thrown into relief many anomalies and paradoxes.

1. President Amin, having expelled tens of thousands of people including the most productive East African traders and industrialists, has inflicted much hardship, and damaged the development prospects of the country; he has also aggravated a social problem in Britain, a major aid-donor to Uganda. Amin's policies have further endangered the already precarious position of the remaining minorities in other aid-recipient African countries (including Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia). Yet Amin continues to receive appreciable Western aid. British aid contributed substantially to Amin's rise to power. A quasi-totalitarian régime in Uganda preceded Amin. In 1966, Dr Milton Obote (Amin's predecessor) destroyed the opposition in a full-scale and bloody civil war with the help of money supplied by British aid.

In Zanzibar the government (which came to power after a coup in 1964) massacred hundreds and probably thousands of Arabs and Indians, as well as many African opponents. British aid was resumed after a brief suspension. Tanzania, the merger of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, has consistently received Western aid, including British aid (with the exception of the period when President Nyerere turned down British cash), in the face of continued political executions in Zanzibar, expulsions and expropriations throughout the country, large-scale uprooting of people, and compulsory collectivisation of farming.

Such instances of large-scale suffering and hardship are rarely noted by aid lobbyists.

2. It is now widely proposed that additional special drawing rights (SDRs) should be created by the international monetary authorities to be issued to poor countries as foreign aid. The creation of this additional international money would be inflationary. Such a proposal is anomalous when inflation causes widespread hardship and its control is (or so we are told) the major economic problem of Western governments. Moreover, some concomitants of inflation (notably, international differences in rates of inflation) are apt to lead to the imposition of

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import controls, which damage the economies of less developed countries.

Even apart from the creation of SDRs as a form of multi-national aid, foreign aid adds to inflationary pressures. As I have already noted, the prospect of aid often encourages Third World inflationary policies because they promote balance-of-payments difficulties, which in turn make appeals for more aid more effective. As aid represents resources given away, it adds to inflationary pressure in the donor countries (unless offset by deliberate restrictions on domestic spending). And in this way it also weakens the balance-of-payments position of the donors. In Britain some of these adverse effects of aid have contributed to the loss of the value of the sterling balance of overseas countries including less developed countries, among which Hong Kong and Malaysia have been conspicuous sufferers.

3. Commodity agreements provide another rich field of paradoxes. They are often intended primarily as a form of aid by raising or maintaining the already high prices of major foodstuffs and raw materials exported (*e.g.* cocoa, coffee, sugar, and tin).

These agreements benefit countries which are relatively prosperous, such as Malaysia, Ghana, Colombia, the Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Thailand, since it is in such countries that external trade is relatively important. And within these countries it is the relatively well-off who benefit most.

4. Many aid-recipient governments have levied specially heavy taxes for many years on the producers of food export crops (Thai and Burma rice, West African cocoa), often through state export monopolies which pay the farmers much less than the world price. Many governments have prohibited, or greatly restricted, private trade in local foodstuffs, raw materials, and imported merchandise, in favour of state trading corporations and state-subsidised or -operated co-operatives. These measures reduce agricultural output and raise the prices of agricultural products. Yet they are often encouraged by aid donors who frequently supply the required administrative personnel. The same applies to the operation of state-sponsored industries and the construction of prestige projects financed from aid, which divert resources from food production.

5. Although the case for aid rests supposedly on the need of the recipients for more capital, practically all of them restrict the inflow and deployment of often highly productive private capital. In India, for instance, foreign investment is strictly controlled and is barred from a wide range of industry and commerce. The expansion and even the current operation of both domestic and foreign enterprises in India are often severely restricted, so much so that factories and businesses are forced to work below capacity—while the government receives aid to expand its own enterprises, using both foreign and domestic resources. Similar policies are pursued by many other aid-recipients. The inflow of subsidised or *gratis* funds from abroad, accruing to governments in various ways, facilitates and encourages the pursuit of such restrictive and economically damaging policies.

6. Aid is supposedly necessary to supplement the resources of the recipients. Many African and Arab governments regularly pass on substantial aid to their actual or potential allies. The Nigerian government has recently granted aid to several neighbouring countries, notably Togo and Dahomey.

7. Aid continues regardless of improvements in the fortunes of recipients (*e.g.* through the discovery of minerals or a rise in export prices). In the early 1960s Nigerian exports amounted to around £160 million a year. In 1973 they will exceed £800 million, and for 1974 they are estimated to exceed £1000 million. This huge increase in export earnings was the result partly of the discovery and rapid development of oil deposits by foreign companies, and partly of large rises in the prices of the country's traditional exports. According to press reports in July 1973, the Nigerian government proposes to spend £120 million on facilities required for an "African & Black Festival" in 1974. However, the British aid programme of several million a year goes on. Similarly, some oil-producing countries in the Middle East, with huge oil royalties, still receive Western aid.

8. Some ideas and proposals, advanced in all seriousness in the advocacy of aid, are nothing less than bizarre. One example is a long and prominent leading article in *The Times* (25 June 1973) which drew on an article by Mr Escott Reid in *Foreign Affairs*. The *Times* article chastises the World Bank and the Western donors for occasional hesitation in granting aid to governments which have expropriated the property of their citizens and that of foreign investors. This hesitation, or passing reluctance, is described as arm-twisting. Both articles advocate that voting on World Bank's aid decisions should be substantially based on the population of the member countries. They were concerned with the inadequate representation of India, Indonesia, Brazil, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nigeria. This suggestion is analogous to proposing that charities should be governed by recipients of their alms, or that banks should be controlled by their borrowers.

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13. Forces Behind Aid

SUPPORTERS OF AID generally seem to be well-intentioned. But they appear to be interested not so much in the effects of aid or in the welfare of the recipients, as in giving away money, sometimes their own, more often that of other people. There is a widespread if vague feeling of guilt in the West, often unaccompanied by any sense of responsibility for the consequences of the actions that issue from it.

Foreign aid may not do much for its supposed beneficiaries, and often contributes to their suffering and hardship. But it does demonstrably benefit influential and articulate sectional interests in the West. These include the staffs of international agencies and of government departments; bored, power- and money-hungry academics; the churches, which increasingly look upon themselves as secular welfare agencies; and exporters who benefit from sheltered markets. There are also supporters of aid who favour it on various political grounds, such as its use as an instrument for promoting what they call social change in the recipient countries, that is the establishment of socialist societies there.

THERE ARE, THUS, reasons why both the actual effects of aid and the shortcomings of the arguments in its favour will continue to be ignored. The substantial flow both of aid and of the familiar arguments for it is therefore almost certain to continue.

Beside the Seaside

You wouldn't say that she "submitted". No,
Whatever prompted her was something new
And docile not at all. Perhaps it had to do
With the short turf, the white cliff edge, the slow
Cloud promenade, the surge and thud below

As each fresh wave broke down. So, anyway,
Touch, tremor, nakedness all made good sense
To her, quite suddenly, and down she lay
And smiled, and helped him to forget the tense
First panic, meeting not the least defence.

And afterwards, she begged a cigarette,
Lay on her back, and beamed back at the blue
Sky, blameless. He was dumb. More vehement yet
The sea beat up against the cliffs, and threw
Its whopping slogs into a cave that drew

The sinewy swell out of a foaming sleeve
And sucked it in, to—like one heaving block
Of quartz—explode: boom hollowly: and leave
In skittery files lickspittling through the rocks
Till the next wave recruited them, and shocked

Itself to spume, finding passivity
Exceeded penetration. He watched (while she
Lay with her skirt around her hips, and smiled
As at a dutiful, obliging child)
And felt the strangest pity for the sea.

William Dunlop

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Michael Longley

Ars Poetica

1
Because they are somewhere in the building
I'll get in touch with them, the wife and kids—
Or I'm probably a widower by now,
Divorced and here by choice, on holiday
And paying through the nose for it: a queue
Of one outside the bathroom for ever
And no windows with a view of the sea.

2
I am writing a poem at the office desk
Or else I am forging business letters—
What I am really up to, I suspect,
Is seducing the boss's secretary
Among the ashtrays on the boardroom table
Before absconding with the petty cash box
And a one way ticket to Katmandu.

3
I go disguised as myself, my own beard
Changed by this multitude of distortions
To stage whiskers, my hair a give-away,
A cheap wig, and my face a mask only—
So that, on entering the hall of mirrors
The judge will at once award the first prize
To me and to all of my characters.

4
After I've flown my rickety bi-plane
Under the Arc de Triomphe and before
I perform a double back-somersault
Without the safety net and—if there's time—
Walk the high wire between two waterfalls,
I shall draw a perfect circle free-hand
And risk my life in a final gesture.

5
Someone keeps banging the side of my head
Who is well aware that it's his furore,
His fists and feet I most want to describe—
My silence to date neither invitation
Nor complaint, but a stammering attempt
Once and for all to get him down in words
And allow him to push an open door.

6
I am on general release now, having
Put myself in the shoes of all husbands,
Dissipated my substance in the parlours
Of an entire generation and annexed
To my territory gardens, allotments
And the desire—even at this late stage—
To go along with the world and his wife.

Alan Ross

The Taj Express

1
Night expresses hooting across India,
The clank and shunt of an empire

Outstaying its welcome. I open eyes
To an ayah's eyes, the shuffle of cards.

Coaldust on my tongue like a wafer,
And in a swaying lavatory a woman's

Knees slanting moonlight at her belly.
The engines hiss and spill.

The Deccan moored to huge mango trees,
Mosquito nets like child brides.

Stations are marble dormitories, fruitstalls
Inset like altars, wax dripping—

An air of the morgue, all these sleepers
Huddled like mailbags without addresses.

Dawn of papaya and fresh lime.

2
The burra-sahib dressed as for the golfcourse,
Shorts, suede shoes, sports shirt open at the neck.

Outside, the bearer chews paan and betel,
Mouth smeared on the edge of haemorrhage.

Whisky and crime stories, and at halts wreaths
Of tuberoses and marigold, ash ceremonies.

Bottles in a dressing case gaudy as spices
In Bow Bazaar, crushed essences like shut parasols.

The rattle of points and bangles. The air
Is sulphurous, spiralling out of mutiny,

The embrace of miners and goddesses,
Where everything escapes, hands palm upward.

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J. P. Ward

The T-Group

Absurdity & The Consequences

THE SCENE is a university room where a speaker is about to address an audience. He has a chairman on his right, who introduces him. But then, instead of getting up, thanking the chairman, and beginning his paper, he sits gazing at the ceiling.

What would follow, if this were to happen? There would be an air of expectancy, followed by the chairman perhaps saying, "Mr—?" *sotto voce*. When even that is ignored it removes all possibility of mistake. The silence, where we were not expecting silence, is intentional. The focus is then instantly on the speaker's motive, and subsequent intentions. The question lies with us: what, short of leaving the room, are we going to do with this session whose leader has so confounded our expectations?

The instant possibility of leaving the room (which becomes important later in the discussion) raises the question of what, in fact, it is that will prevent the audience leaving the room, if it does so prevent it. An audience can stand in three relationships to its speaker, from the point of view of status: superiority, inferiority, equality. If the audience senses its superiority, only some motive from an external moral source (such as compassion, courtesy or duty) will keep it in the room in this situation. (A very junior lecturer, struggling to put over an experiment, might be politely helped so long as his bearing was implicitly deferential.)

The interesting cases are the other two: equality and inferiority. If the audience have at least equal intellectual and/or hierarchical standing, they will not *need* to stay in the room at the speaker's wish: they will only do so if he can retain their interest. It might be hard to see how a silent speaker can be interesting, at least for very long! But suppose the advertised title of his talk were *"Silence"*, and people had attended because of their interest in that subject. It would doubtless dawn on the audience that the speaker's action was in some way related to his topic, and that it might be interesting to stay a while longer, to see what he did, and if we could get any clue to his intentions. This illustration merely indicates the reality of the possibility.

But of course there is a way in which an audience can be kept in a room with a non-speaker (or a non-leading leader) even when they are not interested. This is if they are in one of several possible ways his "inferiors", that is, dependent on him. The dependence may be found along a continuum from the crudely physical to the psychological. He may have locked the door and have the key, or he may, from strength, threaten physically anyone who wants to leave: two situations, of course, prototyped by prisons, POW camps, and similar organisations.[1] A non-human physical constraint is found in, for example, a lift full of people stuck between floors. But in human terms, constraint stemming from an implicit leader's superior status will only be effectual despite lack of leadership if one of several other conditions is satisfied: *(a)* the leader's motive is recognised if not supported; *(b)* an external influential advantage is promissory for the audience-group (*e.g.* money, later honours, etc); *(c)* most important, if the leader is ascribed in his own right wisdom or knowledge sufficient that the audience will faithfully follow what they take to be his wishes even without understanding them. The motive here may be devout wish to serve the unknown, or fear of *justified* unknown reprisals.

I suggest that this last situation (a deliberate instance of which I will now describe) is an analogue for a very important central group of Absurd plays in the tradition of the Theatre of the Absurd, and that such an analogue has great implications.

IN A GROUP known as a "T-Group" (or Training Group) the conditions were deliberately set so that while on the one hand no interest was generated by the speaker (or consultant, as he is called in this case), there was on the other hand

[1] See Erving Goffman, "On the Characteristics of Total Institutions", in *Asylums* (Penguin, 1968), pp. 13–116.

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no physical constraint on the dependent group to stay, nor very much (though perhaps a little) hierarchical constraint. There was in fact psychological dependence.

A group of seven students arrived at the university to take a course in an aspect of Education. They were told to report on the Monday morning following (thus giving them two days to get to know each other) when a "Basic Group Exercise" would take place, in which "we shall examine our relationships with one another and those of the whole group." (The "we", it is noticeable, included the leader.) They were not told what would, or would not, happen; and they barely gave it a thought. On the Monday morning the students assembled in the room. After a few minutes a lecturer appeared. He sat in the vacant chair (this was a seminar room containing no desks or tables) and said nothing. After a moment somebody volunteered the information that such-and-such a student sent his apologies for absence; he had 'flu. The consultant neither answered nor gave any sign that he had heard. For the next half-hour there was total silence in the room.

This silence, however, appeared to the observer to conceal a good deal of embarrassment and anxiety. Some people buried their heads in books as nonchalantly as they could. Some people actually blushed, giggled *sotto voce* nervously, or peered over the tops of their books and notes rather like schoolboys at the back of a classroom. (I should stress that this was a group of "mature students", their average age approaching thirty.) A few sat looking rather defiant. They were quite unlike a group of people, also with nothing to do and also silent, that one might see sitting relaxing on a lawn or in a coffee lounge. They appeared to be wondering what was expected of them.

After about half-an-hour the consultant suddenly spoke. He did so in a fairly expressionless voice, and he chose his words carefully. His remarks were a factual though slightly elaborated statement of what had happened in the preceding half-hour. The suggestion seemed implicit that these activities had achieved little of value for the group members.

AT THIS POINT members of the group, a little defensively, began talking. The gist of their remarks was to tell each other, as well, what had happened in the previous half-hour.[2] Each explained to the other why he had said nothing and why the other had said nothing. There was a sense of relief, of unity being established, of something to talk about. Some explained that they had not felt in the least perturbed by the previous thirty minutes. Some, rather too easily, said they *had* felt disturbed, worried, frightened. They used confession as catharsis.

Enjoying the new feeling of confidence, one student asked the consultant whether the group's corporate analysis had been correct, in the consultant's professional opinion. There was no answer. This occasioned a sense of setback. In many, however, it seemed to cause a determination to do better, and one student with furrowed brow asked anxious questions in what he took to be sociological terminology. A few began to maintain a sceptical silence. The general feeling, however, was a supposition that whatever they were doing they were not doing well enough. The discussion became disjointed.

After another longish period the consultant intervened again. Once again, without overt injunction as to what the group should be doing, he simply explained what they had done, and spoke of his sense that much of what the group had said had been motivated *(a)* by a wish to escape, to draw the discussion away from various directions to which it had been heading; *(b)* by a wish to please what they imagined were the wishes of the consultant.

THE ATMOSPHERE at this point changed again. It now turned from anxious to hostile. With greater or less degree of feeling members denied their attempts to escape from anything. Those who admitted it were to some extent resentful of the consultant drawing attention to it. Equally, whereas the group had previously expressed in terms of anxiety its uncertainty about what it was supposed to be doing, that expression now occurred in hostile terms. Why didn't the consultant, who was supposed to know about these things, help them, advise them, tell them clearly where they were going wrong, instead of merely telling them what they knew already? Needless to say the consultant didn't answer; and since the group had hardly expected him to, their expression of hostility took the form of statements to each other, and to the world in general. One man said, "I feel I've done something wrong", with very heavy sarcasm. Another man then took the chance to tell the group that he had been to an experiment of this sort before (he had hinted at this previously, that he had known what would happen, that if they cared to listen he would give them the benefit of his erudition. The group immediately turned on this man and made him the scapegoat for their present sufferings. They had known all along, they said, that his main contribution would be perversity. This battle was renewed with a good deal more vigour a few

[2] Bion's report of a similar process in a group observed by him is in: W. R. Bion, *Experiences in Groups* (Tavistock, 1956), pp. 33–36.

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days later. For the moment it merely deferred the group's apparent need to take it out of the consultant for his treatment of them.

The consultant's next intervention, true to form, merely states what has happened. He shows that the attack on the erudite student was a substitute attack on himself, who, he feels, the group most needs to get to grips with. He suggests that their annoyance is due to the disappointment the group feels in being let down by the consultant. He appreciates their concern for his feelings but wonders whether they have disposed of their feelings of hostility adequately.

SPACE PREVENTS ME from analysing the continuing stages of this group's development further, and I must summarise the rest fairly briefly.

The group met every day for the week. The important stage has been reached, however, by the consultant's rather disarming undercutting of the group's hostility, and his apparent lack of surprise or resentment at it. The group looks rather miserable, and conversation recommences in a desultory way. The hostility turns to flippancy. The term "big-ears oracle" is coined for the consultant. Comments begin to be random, and of greater or less seriousness. People talk about cars, sport, politics, but at random; there is no programme, nor ever any conviction that this is other than temporary. A man says "These chairs are uncomfortable", and there is laughter. Another man says, "Is your journey really necessary?" There are occasional sardonic asides at the erudite student who had been through the situation before. The only woman, a quiet, self-contained African, comments very occasionally, and usually only when spoken to; she does this with assurance, and there is a sense of shamefacedness among the others. The consultant intervenes, explaining that the group has realised that the Omnipotent Being, there to solve all their problems, has in fact turned out to be a man of straw after all. They have been able to get him off their backs, and are now left with each other. This pulls the group up short; there are some moments of rather thoughtful silence.

In ensuing sessions the group quarrels, laughs, elects a chairman, plays cards, turns on one of its members (who is then defended from an unexpected quarter), tries to read, sometimes gets serious, witnesses a duel between two of its members, toys with its purpose as it conceives it, gets bored, and generally passes the time. The consultant analyses all this, in terms of escape, fight, flight, contest for leadership, and so on. By halfway through the penultimate session the group begins to, as it were, repair to base. There is a feeling of settlement and quiet. The last session ends pleasantly. But there is a feeling also, that the group has undergone a deep and sobering experience which it cannot possibly assess but which, although its individual members afterwards find themselves strangely unable to discuss it, forces them to admit in themselves a certain earth-tremor at their psychic foundations such that things will never be quite the same again, since what had always previously seemed a set of common-sense and manageable everyday human relationships turns out to have a basis in reality at a level as elusive as it is disturbing and profound.[3]

THE GROUP SITUATION I have described would be recognised by social psychologists and group therapists as an extreme form of "T-Group" or Training Group, of the sort first developed in the National Training Laboratories at Bethel, Maine, in 1947, which has since then received rapid popularity among educationists, therapists, and social psychologists in the USA and Europe.[4] The T-Group method is in direct line of descent from a seminal area in the tradition of behavioural study and social science, namely, social psychology, and especially the sociology of small groups, a tradition going back in the first instance to the German sociologist Georg Simmel.[5]

The essence of the small group seen as a type is that it displays "pure" forms of social behaviour. It has underlying consistencies not dependent on the local geography, occupation, class position, or cultural activity of the group concerned. The T-Group, by setting its members aside from these things, reinforces the visibility of such "pure" behaviour. The purpose of doing this is a training purpose at that same fundamental level. It has been used in the training of industrialists, churchmen, students, social workers, and in the rehabilitation of neurotic patients; yet its essential form remains always the same. The leader's purpose (and therefore the theoretical justification for bringing the group together) is to train the group's members in the basic elements of behaviour that the small group would most "purely" contain: human interaction and sensitivity to it, effective-

[3] Bion, pp. 41–55. In fact the students, not being patients in need of cure, handled the experience with less disturbance superficially (so that the group itself maintained a more even equilibrium). They found it, intellectually, deeply and irreversibly disturbing.

[4] For a comprehensive account of research and experiments, see Bradford, Gibb and Beane, *T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method* (New York, 1964).

[5] *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, (ed. Kurt H. Wolf, 1950). For a comprehensive survey of literature and research in group dynamics, see Cartwright & Zander, *Group Dynamics, Research and Theory* (1953).

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ness in understanding this and in absorbing feedback, in understanding of the self, in accepting the democratic process, delegating responsibility, and so on.

As our own sessions showed, this is achieved by the leader placing the group members in a situation from which he then withdraws his leadership. The group's purpose can only exist in the mind of the leader. A T-Group cannot be formed by the will of the members of the group. At most they might ask a leader to form such a group for them, as a result of reading or hearing about such experiments. In practice T-Groups are often formed by people without full awareness on their part of what they are in for.

What is immediately noticeable to the dramatic mind are the very close parallels between the structure of and responses to the T-Group situations in which the members find themselves and the exactly analogous situations and responses depicted in a central group of plays (and some films) normally considered as belonging to the Theatre of the Absurd. The parallels, once noticed, seem inescapable and obvious, and ineradicably impinge on the mind. It is as though the specialist exponents of psychological group work have elaborated their experiments on the basis of a deep myth used independently by existential writers in response to their perception of our modern condition. The implication of this (to be elaborated later) is that the social psychologists are causing their T-Group members to enact human reality rather than telling them about it. The writers, on the other hand, are enacting reality too, but from the point of view of an individual person in that reality; they do not depict "character" in the usual dramatic sense.

As a crude expedient for comparing the Absurdist form and the T-Group situation in the way I have suggested, I will delineate six main feestura which appear common to both. My examples are mainly taken from Ionesco's *Rhinoceros;* Pinter's *The Caretaker, The Room,* and *The Birthday Party;* Beckett's *Waiting For Godot;* Sartre's *Huis Clos;* and Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.* There are, of course, internal variations of perspective and purpose in the Absurdist tradition.

1. WE HAVE, FIRST, *a situation from which the characters cannot escape.*

This situation may be more or less claustrophobic. In *Waiting For Godot* it seems to be the whole world, whereas in *Huis Clos* it is a French Second Empire drawing-room. (It is also "hell," but the point is made dramatically.) In *The Room,* it is a single kitchen in a working-class tenement, and in the film *Twelve Angry Men* it is a jury room. Yet the "room" is not at all ubiquitous in these plays, and even there the characters are often, in fact, superficially free to leave. The constraint is not physical. In *Huis Clos,* when the three characters have realised they are in hell, doomed to remain with each other through eternity, they assume quite soon that the door is locked. The man, Garcin, actually bangs his fists on the door shouting to be let out, but he never tries the handle. When he finally does, he pulls terribly hard, the door flies open and he falls on his back on the floor. Yet even then they do not leave. In Buñuel's film *The Exterminating Angel* the characters are trapped in a room at a late-night house-party, but could leave by simply walking across six feet of empty floor space; they cannot bring themselves to do it.

In Stoppard's play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern find the letter, aboard ship, that condemns them to death, but make no attempt to rescue themselves. The two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, say "let's go", but do not move. The constraint on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is that of their position in a play text (*Hamlet*) from which they can never depart. They *must* be present for their next, Shakespeare-ordained, encounter with Hamlet and Claudius. In *Rhinoceros* it is no place but the fact of the unalterable and uncontrollable change of people into rhinoceroses which establishes the existential sphere within which all future events move. In *The Room.* the constraint is Rose's need to re-affirm repeatedly that that one room *is* where she lives her life and that it is sufficient; she is afraid of any capacity, apparently, to envisage wider horizons or face them, and her "room", by being adequate as she compulsively forces herself to see it, constrains her resultantly not causally.

Pirandello's six characters could turn and leave, just as they first arrived, except that they cannot bring reality into their existence other than by localising it in the flesh-and-blood of the rehearsal-room actors. The jury of twelve men are indeed locked into their room, but to prevent others getting at them, rather than the reverse.

In the student group I have described the same constraint held. Some people did, in fact, leave for a quarter-of-an-hour. Their leaving, which entailed no more than getting up and walking out of the door, was achieved only with a great deal of preparation, even after the decision had been taken. The three people concerned established a ritual procession. They explained to the group, at some length and without contradiction, that it is all right to leave, that no one will stop them leaving, that it will be one in the eye for the consultant, that they are acting

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responsibly, nay with great fortitude, etc. They finally leave the room amid hush, and shut the door with an air of finality. In a quarter-of-an-hour they return in something like the atmosphere of a triumphal procession, immensely pleased with themselves. Their absence was a purgative which did not need to be repeated. The constraint to return was present before the departure. It is clear, then, that the paradoxical situation—that we could leave, and yet cannot—turns out to be *definitive* as well as constraining, and the situation's poignancy and its promise lie in the fact that true leaving entails not the superficial departure from the constraint, but the conquering of it.

2. BUT IF CONQUEST of the constraint is the solution, why is it never conquered? The answer lies in the second common characteristic of the T-Group and the plays, namely *an absent leader who ought to be present, or a present leader who refuses to lead.*

It will be quite clear that there can only be any question of followers staying with this unhelpful leader while still venting their hostility on him if they sense nevertheless some more fundamental sense of dependence at a deeper level. As I said earlier, they may not understand this dependence, and that characteristic appears highly important in the central Absurdist idea. It was central in the student T-Group in the sense that, while the students felt no great deference to the consultant by virtue of his position as university lecturer *"ex officio"*, there was a recurring sense, expressed sometimes openly but more often obliquely, that his knowledge and experience as a social psychologist, his repute and respectability, implied that, absurd as the situation seemed, it covered a more rational intention.

Furthermore, a subordinate relationship of this kind can logically only be permanent if, on the one hand, the members of the group are what Goffman calls "sub-people" (that is, those institutionalised as such; prisoners, mental patients, children); or, on the other hand, if the unhelpful leader is at least analogous to some kind of super-person. For the consultant is not merely a qualified professional. More important, he has (as the sociologists say) an ascribed rather than an achieved status. The group accords him this from the outset and attacks him for not living up to it, these attacks themselves covering layers of anxiety which suggest to them that the leader does have his own good reasons for his actions. There is no question of the group disputing that the post or office of T-Group leader can exist. On the contrary, they attack the leader for failing to fulfil the post's obligations. When these people are normal people, that is, not in any sense patients in need of cure, something analogous to the god-like must be imputed to the leader for reluctant allegiance to be maintained as a universal feature.

In the Absurdist play the absent leader may be mythical or supernatural. In the T-Group the leader's ordinary mortality implies that such status can only be maintained by his adoption of the half-way position in which he has always the potential to assist progress, yet is always withholding it. And this is just what in various ways the plays also allegorise. Some people dispute that "Godot" does refer to something called "God", and Beckett has said himself that if he knew who Godot was he would have conveyed that fact in the play. But people commonly do not claim to know who God is either, and it seems impossible to ignore the transparently obvious reference, even if it be ironic, to "God." In *Huis Clos* the three inmates of hell assume from the start that "They" have rigged the situation, and the whole play contains an underlying acceptance (confirmed at the end by the characters' failure to leave) that the situation is as it were a "natural", since those who understand these things have so arranged it. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* the absent leader is Hamlet, Claudius, or perhaps Shakespeare himself; something or someone of a different order of reality. When Hamlet does appear, he plays with the two underlords, tricks and confuses them, and disappears again. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are tied to Hamlet and Claudius as the T-Group is to its leader, and in both cases the leader refuses to assist with the subordinates' difficulties brought on by that leader himself.

The play's absent leader *has* to be superior at a *different* order of reality. Martin Esslin has pointed out the failure of Clifford Odets' 1930s play *Waiting for Lefty* on the grounds that the expected saviour must disappoint from the start since the expectations of him were always transparently unsatisfactory. Dannie Abse's little-known play *The Visitor* has a similar defect. In Pinter's *The Caretaker* the absent leader is society, the outside world, but it is not a secular or naturalistic society. Rather it is "society transfigured" (as Durkheim put it), and so misleadingly magical or God-like. "Them Blacks", foreigners, the proprietor of the café at Wembley, and the mysterious papers down at Sidcup are all superstitions, imbued with quasi-supernatural qualities. Their right to be this, furthermore, is not questioned by the play's three characters. And similarly, the human situation of the therapeutic T-Group, in cases where it is not the leader who is God but the members who are "sub-

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people" (even if only unknowledgeable but normal students), is interestingly characterised by a recurring quantity of theistic metaphor in recordings of its proceedings.

This was the case in the student group described earlier, and Bion himself has constant recourse to God-imagery and divine metaphor in describing groups to which he has been consultant. Members think of him as "a sort of group deity" who is responsible for all that takes place. "The culture of the group might be described as a miniature theocracy"—that is, not a dictatorship. Much discussion of God and proposals for and rejections of renewal of belief in some kind of religious faith (or some structurally analogous ideal) ensue. At the failure of the leader, there is in Bion's words a tendency to form work groups which are then "influenced in the direction of producing a Messiah, be it person, idea, or Utopia." All this occurs in the T-Group situation, a human activity devised by humans for human purposes.

3. WHAT DO THE PLAY characters or T-Group members do in this situation? I shall use the adjective *taskless* to describe the group, and it should be clear that if a leader can put us in a position of subordination while refusing to make explicit the instrumental context of the dependence, then we are unable to know what we should consciously be aiming at. This is the essence of the Absurdist theatre. As Ionesco has put it, "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose . . . cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless."[6] As our student put it, "Is your journey really necessary?" In *Rhinoceros* the task should be, it seems, to go on with ordinary life. But since the characters do absolutely nothing at all but try to cope with or idly speculate on the rhinoceros question, they inevitably end up turning into rhinoceroses, thus acting out the role-theorist's dictum "we become what we see."[7] Rosencrantz and Guildenstern fill in time until Hamlet reappears: Vladimir and Estragon fill in time repeating a daily act of attendance; and in *The Caretaker* Aston, depicted as of a different order of existence from society generally (*i.e.* by his sub-normality) and so unemployable by it, fills in time by setting himself spurious tasks like mending a plug and building a shed, none of which however he ever does.

N. F. Simpson's *One Way Pendulum* takes the taskless quality of the Absurdist situation as its starting-point. The characters occupy themselves with entirely superfluous, lunatic and self-appointed tasks, such as assembling the parts of a Do-It-Yourself Old Bailey Kit in the drawing-room, or, in the attic, teaching five hundred Speak-Your-Weight weighing machines the Hallelujah Chorus.

The T-Group organiser deliberately contrives this situation in order to face the group with the fact that the confrontation and conquest of reality are not task situations.

The absence of a task means that the social relationships in which we are engaged must be considered as to their existential or absolute nature. They cannot be used instrumentally, nor can we use such instrumental basis as an escape into security. In the film *Twelve Angry Men* an isolated peer group of male adults—*i.e.* a jury—is distinct from a T-Group precisely in that the presence of a clear-cut and pressing duty renders their situation wholly unmetaphysical and entirely social. So much so, that even the task's very sombre nature in those terms (it is to decide whether or not to send a young man to the electric chair) only impinges on them after the most ingenious and elaborate pleas from the one jury member who feels the moral pressure to consider moral implications. But, that once achieved, the fact that the task cannot satisfy (*i.e.*, as the group themselves often say, they can never know whether the verdict they reach is the right one) does not deter from its efficacy *as task* in preventing the action taking on a metaphysical orientation or finding itself in a metaphysical setting. The completion of the task *is* the completion of the group. In a near-T-Group setting (no leader, no escape, etc.) the film shows how each jury member's prototype social and psychological characteristics become entirely directed, one way or another, to the task's solution. The villain, so far as there is one at all, is not the prejudiced and violent father who holds out longest against the "Not Guilty" verdict but the impatient baseball-fan who changes his vote exactly half-way since he does not care at all one way or the other. The eloquent instigator of the discussion (Henry Fonda) is as much a prig as is the bigoted staller (Lee J. Cobb) a brute. In the T-Group, the search for a task to save us from our fear and embarrassment (diagnosed by the consultant as flight) is recurrent. The formally attempted tasks (such as having a debate on a clear topic) fail, only to be replaced by minor attempts at getting support in attacking another individual, telling stories, playing games, and so on. The power of the film lies in the near-absurd setting's contrast to the task's irritating and unwanted dominance; hence the adjective in the film's title.

[6] Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1964), p. 17.

[7] Or, in G. H. Mead's words, we "take on the role of the other."

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4. In the absurd situation and the T-Group, deliberate communication is *the language of nonsense*. The only meaningful verbal activity between characters is ejaculation. Language cannot proceed from instrumental action or community living rooted in actual places, because neither exists. Disputes in symbolic logic turn out to be baseless (as in *Rhinoceros*) since they cannot act on the material of abstract premises themselves derived from observations of real human activity in the real world. They are wholly mathematical and tautologous. There is no common ground on whose self-evident importance all are agreed. Thus the dialogue is meaningless, sophistical, and whimsical, or (as in Pinter) a matter of non sequiturs, unanswered and often unheard by the other, since they do not impinge by their realistic force. This is brought out by the fact that the taskless situation leaves only logic, that is symbolic logic, as an apparent basis for verbal interaction (apart from discussion, necessarily futile for reasons given, as to whether we either leave or—in principle—destroy the leader).

In Ionesco's and Stoppard's plays this truth is recognised *a priori* and the plays' texts are, in fact, celebrations and enjoyments of nonsense's possibilities. (In fact this is not always true of Ionesco; there are sadder undertones on occasion. In *The Chairs* an old couple spend an entire evening in a large hall assembling chairs for, and then actually speaking to, a large company, who are in fact not there. The old couple then commit suicide.) That a rhinoceros has run over a cat is worthy of report in the local paper's Dead Cats Column, while Berenger's reaction, "It was probably a flea run over by a mouse", derives from his life-long experience of the Southerner's proneness to exaggeration. Botard then raises the question of the cat's colour, the colour bar being a matter that moves him strongly. In Stoppard's *Jumpers*, the professor of philosophy finds the thought that what he took, yesterday, to be a train leaving Paddington Station might have been Paddington Station leaving the train, to be a hypothesis not logically excludable without rigorous investigation. Ionesco's and Stoppard's plays are made of such material. It is enjoyed for its own sake. Their plays begin at this assumption.

In Pinter, the characters often create, as well as find themselves in, the Absurd position. The stupefaction they experience, through their innate absence of understanding, their position in the basement of the class system, and their resultant inability to perform any action of consequence in universal, meaningful terms (so that in *Silence* neither character answers the other through the entire play), leaves them with no ability to piece together a meaningful dialogue to a required end. Vladimir and Estragon, however, are far more aware of the difficulties they are under. They make, as policy, overt attempts to establish dialogues that sound right, that feel real. Yet they only succeed when they orchestrate, or make poetry; that is, when they communicate not so much with each other but, as one, with the audience. Otherwise it is abortive. After one riposte from Estragon, Vladimir says "that's right, let's contradict each other." And Estragon says, "Impossible", although he has just done it. Thus it is impossible to decide on such a course as an expedient. The ironic underlying assumption is that one ought to be able to bring about such communication; in some way it feels necessary. Yet in the analysed situation it could achieve nothing, for there is no task, nor will the absent leader provide one. What else, other than nonsense, poetry, or ejaculation (such as Vladimir's anguished cry, "Say anything at all!") can sentences achieve?

The T-Group's situation is self-contradictory. Its members are to "examine their relationships", yet this is impossible since until they meet in the group they have no relationships. There is no way to study a group to which we belong unless that group has some other, different activity round whose axis the group's existence can be conceived of as locating. The group members find that, with no task, to discuss their relationships is to discuss themselves discussing themselves. Thus they become flippant, aggressive, or maudlin—or angrily talk past each other. Whimsicality occurs when, with no task present in which to hide our insecurities, our need for ego-defence without context is total.[8]

Only in *Huis Clos* are the characters allowed to work out their situation in logical terms. This does, however, amount to a weakness in the play's conclusion. Garcin becomes, impossibly, a hero, a character. He says (to Inez) "I cannot leave you here, gloating over me, with all those thoughts running through your head. . . . If you have faith in me, I am saved." He chooses a principle. As Esslin remarks, "[Sartre] presents his sense of the irrationality of the human condition in the form of highly lucid and logically constructed reasoning"; that is, Sartre in effect contradicts his own position. Esslin's comment on Camus is equally apposite: "If he argued that in our disillusioned age the world has ceased to make sense, he did so in the elegantly rationalistic and discursive style of an eighteenth-century

[8] Bion, p. 39; "[I noticed] the futility of the group's conversation. Judged by ordinary standards of discourse, the group's conversation is almost devoid of intellectual content."

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moralist. . . . " All this raises another point which is of very great interest.

5. I HAVE ARGUED that realistically rooted logic has no place in the Absurd situation. Now the classical arena for logical discussion, the pure case of it in action, is between *two* people on an equal basis. This is because the intrusion of a third person is the first step on the road to confusion. At the simplest level, there is no basic rule by which the two non-speakers can decide who is to answer the speaker's argument. Plato's dialogues are carried out largely in this way.[9] Yet at a human level of action this is entirely unreal. The spectators in Plato applaud dutifully when good points are made. They never interrupt or go and have lunch, or betray any emotion; if they do, it is as it were to add a little incidental colour. Yet many Absurdist plays do rely on a pairing of two speakers to portray the artist's intuitive vision. What can we make of this, and how can we relate it to the taskless therapeutic group where groups are invariably larger than two?

Bion names as observed facts three basic assumptions which any T-Group of this kind necessarily makes. These are prior to any intellectual understanding of or decision to make such assumptions. One is that of fighting or trying to escape the leader and the situation. The second is the position of dependency which is assumed. But the third assumption is connected with the idea of Hope. The assumption, in Bion's experience, is that if grounds for hope appear, or an activity commences which seems to imply some kind of hope, it is to be tolerated. The hope is for some Messiah, person, or idea that will save the group from the hatred and despair engendered by the taskless situation. *Since this is impossible, it is essential that this hope also remain unborn*—since that would only bring a regression, afterward, to earlier feelings. Furthermore, it is the *hope* that must remain unborn, not the result. Even the hope is not made explicit, and it never takes the form of a purpose. The T-Group leader, to maintain the T-Group form, cannot allow the hope even to be overtly expressed; instead, through his consistent inscrutability, it fades stillborn into some unexceptionable moral platitude.[10]

The quite remarkable thing, according to Bion's recorded experience of his therapeutic groups, is that this feeling of unreal but indulged hope is always engendered when two members of the group (not less or more) seem somehow to strike a balance or harmony in their relationship which implies a degree of ignoring the other members and which tends to monopolise the group. Bion records the sense of expectation and embryonic hopefulness which was evident so long as these pairing activities lasted. He relates this to a basic sexuality in ways which are not fully comprehensible. He stresses, however, that this does not imply any amatory relationship between the pair in the group except at the most general level. It is as though the two people in their complementary relationship imply the two facets of ideal hope unborn and the democratised (and so available to others) hope we can deal with without the hated necessity of psychological development in ourselves. At the most mundane level, an "engagement" between two group members can indefinitely distract the others from squarely facing their responsibility (in Bion's words, to develop; in Tillich's, the "courage to be".[11])

Again Bion's imagery is characteristic: "effort here seems to be devoted to a Messiah born, out of wedlock, in a bed of bulrushes or a manger, with one exalted parent, Pharaoh's daughter or the Deity, and one less exalted." The two group members, unlike each other but in balance, seem to imply this possibility. We are reminded that dyad theory (theory of pairs) in group dynamics is held by many social psychologists to account for the majority of processes that occur in all small-group behaviour. That is, that one pair can capture, embody or express sufficient interest or "richness" of interaction in themselves for the remainder to become an audience for indefinite periods.[12]

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[9] Gilbert Ryle has argued that Plato's dialogues were written for performance. This does not, of course, mean he regards them as dramatic in the full human sense. See Ryle's essay in *Ryle* (ed. Wood & Pitcher, 1970).

[10] This need not even be strictly moral. It might be some remark like, "Well, I know one thing—I'm certainly looking forward to the summer."

[11] Paul Tillich, *The Courage To Be* (1962). Tillich mainly contrasts the courage to be with the ontology of anxiety, but another implicit contrast (referred to later) is with the courage to do.

[12] There is an interesting connection here with the importance of dyad theory in social psychology generally. See *Simmel*, chapter 3. For a more recent discussion see J. W. Thibaut and H. H. Kelley, *The Social Psychology Of Groups* (1959), Part I. "We assume that if we can achieve a clear understanding of the dyad we can subsequently extend our understanding to encompass the problems of larger and more complex social relationships. . . . The basic concepts that we use throughout the book are introduced, defined and illustrated in our analysis of the dyad. It is our conviction that these concepts have general applicability beyond the dyad."

G. H. Mead's theory of role-taking is always implicitly based on an underlying dyadic relationship. See G. H. Mead, *On Social Psychology* (1964). Schutz' idea of reciprocity of perspectives assumed by the ego ("hic-illic") has the same starting-point. A. Schutz, *Collected Papers*, Vol I (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1964).

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AND IT IS NOW PERHAPS POSSIBLE to see the importance of the paired group, Vladimir and Estragon, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Goldberg and McCann in *The Birthday Party*, the logician and his friend in *Rhinoceros*, and countless other pairs of people from Laurel and Hardy, Morecambe and Wise, Sherlock Holmes and Watson, upward. (Auerbach has most interestingly shown how the "*sublimitas-humilitas*" motif in mediaeval Christian literature has also the same purpose of democratised hope, or hope unborn or ungendered.[13])

The intrusion of a third person or more simply reduces the situation to confusion, solvable only by chorus or dance. Thus the choric principle is fundamental in many plays neither Absurd nor heroic. Realistic logical discussion leads to principle and psychological development, to character and hero. Only the pair, apparently, can face the absurd, taskless, claustrophobic, leader-withdrawn world with any kind of positive activity. The activity tends to be sad, comic, whimsical, purposeless ultimately, but in a sense joyful. I would argue that this is present right across *Waiting for Godot* despite all the commentaries about Beckett's pessimism. It is impossible for the complementary Vladimir and Estragon not to set each other off in a way made possible by the complementary natures that make them, in the eyes of many critics, one person not two. Vladimir is ethereal, philosophical, upward-looking; Estragon is downward-looking, practical, earthy. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are foils in that Rosencrantz positively takes the weight of lead out of Guildenstern's seriousness; Guildenstern positively puts the potential meaning into Rosencrantz's empty flippancy.

A lightweight whimsicality, instead of logic, is born, out of which nothing ever comes but which serves to delude us into passing the time of our imprisonment painlessly. We never doubt the combined capacity of Goldberg and McCann in *The Birthday Party* to handle Stanley at will and with equal whimsy. If Garcin and Estelle, in *Huis Clos*, could establish themselves as a pair, they would be saved; and toward this they work. In each case the duologue gets going; it generates energy; it seems as though some seed of unknown possibility is swelling inside it. Yet all remains unrealised, for it can never latch on to a possibility of teleological action. The hope remains unborn. In Vladimir's words, "That wasn't such a bad little canter."

6. IT IS ONLY POSSIBLE however for this to seem significant because of the sixth and remaining characteristic of these plays and groups to which we can refer; that of *surreality*.

Hope would promise a foothold out of the nightmare. Beckett's characters, in the main, live nowhere; those in Sartre's play are dead; and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have no existence except in terms of another dramatic work. In the Absurdist plays the people are characters in someone else's play rather than in real life (such as Pirandello's Six Characters). Or else everyone is turning into a rhinoceros. Or time is slowed down for them so that (as in *The Room*) every particle of thought or emotion is relentlessly brought to the surface by microscopic dialogue.[14] Or every day is the same as the day before or after. Or they are in hell. Or in piles of sand or dustbins. Or they are metaphors, images, of a single individual's reality. (They are unreal also in having no blood-tie or kinship. Marriage is possible, but there are no siblings or children; and in most of the plays, though not all, the main figures are male.)

This surreality I take to find its analogue in the T-Group in that the latter, even as it is really practised, is impossible in a special sense. Two reactions are often forthcoming when one attempts to describe the T-Group form to a layman. One, that people ought to leave. The other, often with some vehemence, that it is nonsense, pointless, of no meaning. Yet this reaction usually comes across as a challenge, of the form, "Go on, prove that it is not nonsense!"

But this is impossible, because it *is* nonsense. It is a Nonsense group. That is, in the extreme form in which I have described it, it can have no purpose in itself beyond that of letting itself exist, and seeing what it is like. It could not occur as a natural, fluid result of any other events or relations in secular society. Therefore to use it in dramatic terms must imply some reference

[13] Auerbach especially discusses a passage from the 12th-century Christmas play *Mystère d'Adam* in which the sublime themes of man's fall and redemption are rendered approachable by the presentation of the argument between Adam and Eve in dialogue of the simplest everyday psychological reality. Auerbach points out that much Christian writing (*e.g.* Bernard of Clairvaux, the Song of Songs, and many sermons) have the *sublimitas-humilitas* juxtaposition. In the Christian tradition, of course, hope can become explicit. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (1957), pp. 124–137.

[14] John Russell Taylor has made a similar point about *The Room*, but he argues only that it affords a special kind of dramatic poetry "which lies in the most ordinary objects" at the microscope's other end. He suggests then that "all question of realism and fantasy, naturalism or artifice becomes irrelevant." I suggest that this is not so, since the "stretching" effect of making every incident five times its normal life-length must induce a surrealistic effect. John Russell Taylor, *Anger and After* (1962), p. 261.

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to a surreal, allegorical, or metaphysical world. I know of no play where a therapeutic group has been portrayed literally; but if it were it would at once turn into a social problem play. This is because on stage the T-Group could not be a "pure case." It would be a T-Group watched by an audience. Internally, the taskless group can have no witnesses.

THIS UNREALITY IS brought on essentially because if (as Marx and Hegel wanted to say) man is a creature who brings himself into existence by working, by expending energy at the point where the meeting of two distinct realities (physical or otherwise) requires resolution, then imaginatively to remove that real fact raises imaginatively the question of man's place in relation to other, imaginary, other-worldly, surreal orders of reality.

One might say that the poignancy in the Absurdist play derives from the expression of man's own power of vision, his own yearning to know about that other reality order, and to refuse to accept that his particular straits are the alpha and omega of what is possible. Yet if, as in *Waiting For Godot*—effectively the prototype Absurdist play—the setting of those straits is (as it is surely intended to be) the entire universe as man sees it, then man has indeed no exit, and his role is no more than to accept what he is: to be man. So much is existentialist philosophy. It is Tillich's "courage to be." But it contrasts the Marxist-Hegelian view. The ascribed status of the absent leader, rather than his achievement—his being rather than doing—implies that man's response to that unavoidable leadership is also one of bearing rather than action. The *absence of a task* is central in the Absurdist tradition. It is the definitive characteristic. In many contemporary plays, superficially descendants of Absurdism with their confinement in a space (a bed-sitter, hotel, hospital, crashed aircraft, or jury-room), their lack of leadership and their unreality at least from the everyday perspective, the presence of a Task (to get well, get home, stage a revolution, and so forth) brings the plays immediately back into the realm of the social and political rather than the religous. John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and *A Hotel in Amsterdam* and Peter Nichols' *The National Health*, and the film *Twelve Angry Men* are exactly of this kind. They protest, exploit, or document an identifiably social situation.

As far as the plays are concerned, the greatness of the greatest Absurdist plays lies in the fact that in each case the particular feature of the Absurdist situation most centrally magnetic to the author does exactly bring out the language corresponding to the author's response to that feature and most able to express it. Stoppard and Ionesco could not make plausible plays out of meaningless banter, no matter how witty, did they not intuitively grasp the logical stage at which such nonsense would appear in the Absurdist situation.[15] In their case the nonsense derives from the surreality.

In much of Pinter, where the situations approximate more nearly to what is realistically possible, the characters' subordination to, and fear of, what is missing or unknown (society, the man in the basement, the threatening menace) is what cripples their power to act for themselves. The slow ponderous dialogue, studded with non sequiturs, conveys a puzzled and dazed bewilderment on each character's part at the absurd quality of his existence. In Sartre's play alone do the characters themselves describe to us the logic of their situation. They stand outside it as well as in it; they have the classical detachment appropriate to the Second Empire drawing-room. In Beckett, pairs of players attempt endlessly to generate hope. They see what is wrong. They try every expedient. They wring poetry out of what is left to them: not work, nature, a house, a holiday, children, travel—but existence.

THE ELABORATORS OF THE T-Group as a training method have stumbled unawares on a myth form to which their experiments seem relentlessly to have led them.

Michael Argyle writes that "the most important question [about T-Groups] is whether overt behaviour back on the job [*i.e.* after T-Group experience] changes in the desired manner."[16] But why "back on the job"? Argyle's own report tells us that T-Group experience does not, in fact, produce any measurable improvement in job-performance itself, only in sensitivity to behaviour generally. Would it not be curious to have expected otherwise?

The T-Group is taskless. In what way could it change our ability to perform our tasks? Tasks are achieved by the subordination of the individual to the requirements of the task; that is,

[15] Susan Sontag has argued that Ionesco's work is nothing more—though it is a feat in itself—than the use of meaninglessness dramatically. It tells us nothing "about" meaninglessness (her quotes). When this quickly exhausts itself, as it must, Ionesco has to give point to his plays by artificially inserting ideas, or human character, by an act of (Ionesco's) will. One such example is the rather false self-affirmation of Berenger at the end of *Rhinoceros*. Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (1967), pp. 115–23. I accept that this ending is weak; it does not detract, however, from the vital, even joyous, expression of nonsense until that point.

[16] Michael Argyle, *The Psychology Of Interpersonal Behaviour* (Penguin, 1967), p. 195.

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by hierarchy, organisation, and delegation. Yet the T-Group is a leveller of status. Tasks imply the giving and receiving of instructions, and the T-Group leader disdains to do this. In the T-Group, achievement, under the frustration, nonsense, and constant ego-defence, is only a matter of a real acknowledgement of our position. That recognition enables what Bion calls development, and the T-Group can achieve no other thing.

This has an educational implication which underlies all other educational reality. Man is not an animal whose language is such that, told something, his necessary nature is to accept it. Language does not have in its nature that automatically modifying power. It therefore follows that a confrontation with what we actually are can occur only in, not the language of instruction, but a designed experience whose effects are irreversible. Instruction can wholly succeed without maturation on the part of the instructed since instruction tells facts about the natural environment or about man's previously constructed cultural artefacts. These can only necessarily implicate us in so far as they meet needs by spiritual, intellectual, or material sustenance.

But the Absurd drama and the T-Group ruthlessly insist that we are capable, at the profoundest level, of a certain kind of development, yet that this may be no gain in any but the most ultimate of terms. We can expect nothing of it. By being forced backwards, by having Leader, Task, the natural world of the physical planet, and the possibility of interaction stripped from under us, we are left with—not nothingness, but reality.

This is the message of the existential philosopher. In Sartre's words: "man's only essence is his existence: the fact that having no essence he can make of himself what he will. . . ." Since we live in a physical world, ourselves subject to physical laws, Sartre's remark is not the whole truth; but it is the underlying truth. It will force the T-Group exponent to ask himself: Why do social psychologists like himself, in fact, commonly compromise this reality? Why do they give their clients a hand, and have ordinary commonplace discussions between T-Group sessions? and by their interventions prevent the T-Group from being pushed to its logical extremity?

THE GREATNESS OF A WRITER lies in his "style", as Barthes uses the word[17]—that by which the unique and only language peculiar to that writer is discovered to convey the personal deep myth within him. But since Absurdist plays do not shine in their power of characterisation or acutely-observed twists of plot, their greatness must find its source elsewhere. We can describe it as the "courage to be", expressed in language. The playwright, according to his personal style or myth, just *is*, in the face of the underlying reality. Ionesco's response is to clown, Pinter's to be intrigued and to intrigue, Beckett's to make poetry from the reduction to existence itself.

The insight of the social psychologist is different in kind. His job is to observe what occurs, by means of a humanistic type of interpretation. There is some argument among sociologists as to how far their subject is an "art" or a "science"; but in the case of the T-Group, and much social psychology, the position is clear. The social psychologist (unlike the sociologist of industry, or the social theorist) and the dramatist (unlike the poet or novelist) are like each other in that they put *real people into situations*, rather than only writing about them in books. Dramatists fill a stage with actors, who then interact in real life with an audience. Social psychologists get real people into experimental situations: they *make* them do things. Both are tied by being unable to shelter in abstractions or the physical world. There is a feedback to them and on them of the people with whom and *on* whom they work. The Absurdist playwrights (Pinter, Beckett, Ionesco and others) have convinced in that what they portray from within themselves has *de facto* impressed not only through print but through the medium of interaction, the clear reason also why they (as much as dramatists of other kinds) have portrayed overtly the nature of drama itself.[18]

But we can sympathise with the T-Group experimenter, for he is in a dilemma. The pressure is on him to compromise, by reducing his degree of "absence"; that is, by naming no task, yet himself occasionally contributing as a quasi-member, offering sympathetic comment or suggestion, and to allow what after all he does have, his own humanity, to be visible in the situation. Why is there this pressure? In order to prevent what certainly may otherwise happen—the great distress and, on occasion, breakdown of one or more of the group's members in the face of this false situation and this undivine man who horrifically pretends to be what he is not to an end hidden from them.

In such cases T. S. Eliot's line "humankind cannot bear very much reality" has, on occasion in the extreme T-Group experience, received rather sobering experimental verification.

[17] Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero* (1967), pp. 15–20.

[18] Most obviously Pirandello, *Six Characters*, Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and *The Real Inspector Hound* (a parody of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*), and Beckett's music-hall comedians transposed.

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Alan Brownjohn

In Hertfordshire

Not very meek are the polytechnics, they
Shall inherit the earth; what there is left
After Construction Units' rummagements.—Come
Hell and the low waters of this stricken place,
I'd elude them by transmogrifying to a
Cat safe with ninety-nine lives on
A Hemel Hempstead walkway, or a muddied

Reservoir swan, or a magpie fumbling
The scrawny grasses of roadhouse roundabouts,
But this would be enduring, not enjoying:
Single-manned nearby, the Green Lines would
Rattle on more slowly than the stagecoach past churned
Verges stuck with signs, and it would make,
Like other people's, a sort of country life.

But living, a human in all this, system-built
For profit-sharing, for Helping to Build the Firm,
One would feel all the prep schools, in big Victorian houses
Among arranged glades eking out the hopes
Of the techno-bourgeoisie; dance, young, in the formica
Discotheques of Letchworth; rent house where Ebenezer's paltry
Cities are nailed down in the duckboards of Hatfield; carry

One's young in wire Macfisheries' baskets across
Littered precincts of pools and statuary; grow old
In the Community Centre in front of screens pocked with
Supersonic interference; get interred
In somewhere undulant and discreet behind
A subtopian hill. Against this death, in Barnet perhaps,
Some poor bloody Blake might frenzy a while, then

Take out a mortgage himself, or move to Leeds.—Though
Consumer Groups rampage, and the Hadley Green Fabians
Plan, plan soft turquoise bathrooms in central heating,
And the spirit's life goes on (flocks out
On Sundays of Vivas and Toledos to wafers and
Lollies of sweet consolation, New English
Sermons and Welwyn's holy ice-cream chimes)

All around still, in securest sunlight, the
Brownies parade for Thinking Day, the Rugby Clubs
Run their Development Sweepstakes, the commuters play
Aryan golf and buy private treatment, and
Telescoped Avengers lie on the reservations among
Sprays of demented glass as company
Jaguars bray, and scream, past.
So don't get there if you

Need not, you'd find your escapable future ready, grazing
With jaws like Corporations on miles of forgotten
Scrubland forty miles from the centre of the boil:
Its fangs are of reinforced concrete and triple glazing,
Its eyes are huge stacks of strip-light in Industrial Areas
Refining precisions to blur life, imprinting so tidily on
Clicking cards the particular patterns of your death.

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Column

IT IS NOW the basis of official government policy that Britain is facing its greatest crisis since the War, and the British people, who are by way of being connoisseurs of crises, are beginning to believe that this may be so. Indeed there is plenty of evidence to show that it is, in the shape of unlit and unheated shops and offices, idle factories, disrupted communications, and the very real hardships suffered by both individuals and business concerns as a result of the three-day working week. Yet people accept this situation, on the whole, with remarkable patience and good humour and there is a singular absence of those heightened and exacerbated feelings, those violent clashes of opinion, which one expects to become evident at some great crisis in a nation's history. The Government is constantly being accused by its opponents of pursuing "divisive" policies, and indeed divisiveness seems to be far more characteristic of the people's elected representatives than of the people themselves. Perhaps that is their métier. But if one is to judge by one's own experience, what most people seem to feel is a sense of bewilderment and helplessness, as if they faced a situation which they did not understand and for which no convincing remedy was readily available. Of course, a general election always concentrates people's minds, but in this case one doubts if it will clarify their highly ambivalent feelings about the choices which are open to them.

If this is so, then perhaps ordinary people have a better appreciation of what the "crisis" really means than many of those who, in Parliament, the press, or the trade unions, claim to lead, guide and instruct them. The uncertainty and ambivalence of their response to it may reflect a sense that, in a large part at least, it is the result of events which are beyond Britain's control and of difficulties for which Britain alone can offer no solutions. In this sense the crisis which Britain faces is not merely a British crisis, even if it has some specifically and characteristically British features. It is essentially an episode, and on a larger view perhaps only a minor one, in a much greater crisis which involves all the advanced industrial countries of the world and requires the cooperation and understanding of all of them if it is to be overcome.

EVEN WHEN Britain has solved her immediate difficulties, the larger ones will still remain and Britain will still be inextricably involved in them. When the trains are running again, when the miners resume normal work, when industry returns to the five-day week, the problem of the world energy shortage will still remain, the problem of world inflation will still remain, the problem of an increasingly unstable international situation will still remain; and it is these problems which will determine Britain's future and not whether the miners' demands can be accommodated within Phase Three or whether trains shall be driven without a speedometer. In such a context, it is quite reasonable to describe Britain's immediate troubles as a little local difficulty. What matters in the long run are developments which Britain in isolation has by now little power to control or influence. Perhaps that is why people accept the inconveniences, and worse, of the immediate crisis so cheerfully and philosophically. They know that it is not the real thing and unreasonably hope that, with a little bit of British luck, the real thing may still be avoided.

UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, the practical difficulties of the present state of affairs are sufficiently pressing to occupy people's attention to the exclusion of almost everything else. When unemployment leaps to a million in the space of a few days, when working-class incomes are in some cases cut to a half by the operation of the three-day week, when thousands of people are prevented from working at all by the disruption of the railway system, it is perhaps unreasonable to expect that they should give any thought to wider and less urgent problems; and even if they did it would be natural that they should feel that, as things are at the moment, these are matters for other people and not for Britain, which can do nothing about them.

Oddly enough, in some people such feelings give rise to an extravagant optimism: when today's troubles are over, all will be well. In Mr Richard Crossman, for instance, Britain's future (if only we can shake ourselves free of the shackles of the Common Market!) induces a state of positive euphoria. Once the problem of the miners is settled, our mineral resources (including North Sea oil) will give us a prosperity, self-sufficiency, and freedom of action only exceeded by Norway's; and as an offshore island, liberated from European entanglement, we shall enjoy a Golden Age in which all our present miseries will be forgotten.

Such fantasies tempt one to believe that, under the strain of events, Mr Crossman has, temporarily we hope, taken leave of his senses; at least it would be more charitable to think so than to believe he has so completely misunderstood our present predicament as his naïve Utopia would

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seem to indicate. The notion that, however much North Sea oil may strengthen Britain's economic position in the coming decade, it can make us free of all the difficulties which threaten the rest of the world betrays an almost total incomprehension of the kind of society in which we live today; though one should not perhaps blame Mr Crossman too much for this, because it is an incomprehension which he shares, alas!, with many other people.

If there is one lesson which recent events should have combined to bring home to everyone, it is, one might have thought, that our contemporary civilisation, in which we are all condemned to live, is of such intricacy and complexity that the Biblical precept, *Ye are all members one of another*, has been literally fulfilled, though in ways which do not have scriptural authority. But it is also a civilisation of such frailty and delicacy that it is vulnerable to the attack of almost any group of individuals (miners in the pits, sheikhs in the desert, terrorists anywhere) who wish to disrupt it. Mr Crossman, in a flight of poetic fancy, may convince himself that countries like Britain or Norway, green isles, or icebergs, floating in a sea of oil, can detach themselves from the mainland and find advantage where others founder. But in attempting to do so they would be flying in the face of the most elementary facts of existence today; they would also be adding one more strain on the delicate fabric of contemporary society, and at the moment the truth would seem to be that it cannot stand many more.

ONE MIGHT WITH ADVANTAGE compare Mr Crossman's heady fantasies with the prospect before us as outlined by the President of the United States. In a letter last month to heads of governments, proposing a conference of oil-consumer states, Mr Nixon emphasised that the energy crisis "threatens to unleash political and economic forces that could cause severe and irreparable damage to the peace and stability of the world," and that in the face of such a threat the only chance was to cooperate or disintegrate. "Two roads lie before us," wrote Mr Nixon. "We can go our own separate ways, with the prospect of progressive division, the erosion of vital interdependence and increased political and economic conflict. Or we can work in concert, developing enlightened unity and cooperating for the benefit of all mankind." Mr Nixon, however, noted that of all the countries in the world the United States was best placed to act independently and make the most advantageous deals for itself. "It could be," he said, "that we'll be driven to this," but it would only be at the cost of increasing the problems and difficulties of everyone else.

It is not only oil which concerns Mr Nixon. He has also spoken recently of the dangers, partly as a result of the oil crisis, partly as a result of inflation, of a world economic depression which again present the major industrial powers with the choice between cooperation and going their own way separately to destruction. Here also Mr Nixon might claim that, in case of necessity, the United States was of all countries best placed to act independently. Nevertheless, such a choice could, in the end, only operate to the mutual disadvantage of all.

I hold no brief for President Nixon; but when he writes and speaks in such terms I wish he were free of his own local difficulties and carried all the authority and prestige which, in normal circumstances, are attached to the office of the President of the United States. And one cannot help contrasting his response to the crisis which faces all the advanced industrial countries with that of, say, President Pompidou or Sir Alec Douglas-Home, which appears to be dictated entirely by the narrowest and most rigid form of national self-interest; as if, in such circumstances, the only genuine self-interest is not the interest of all.

One wonders even more at the contrast between Mr Nixon and Mr Crossman. The first speaks as the leader of the strongest, the most vigorous, in many people's view the most aggressive capitalist country in the world; yet he speaks as one who fully understands that even the United States cannot prosper in isolation. The second speaks as a representative of democratic socialism and he speaks in the voice of a jingo Little Englander, whose response to a common crisis is to let the devil take the hindmost; or, more simply, *I'm all right, Jack*.

THERE ARE THOSE, of course, both in America and elsewhere, who will say that Mr Nixon exaggerates the dangers of the present international situation in order to distract attention from his domestic political difficulties; just as there are those in this country who believe that Mr Heath exaggerates the seriousness of the power shortage in order to distract attention from the failure of his own economic policies. It would be truer to say that Mr Nixon is trying to concentrate people's attention, both in America and in other countries, on dangers in comparison with which even Watergate and its consequences may reasonably be dismissed as a minor political scandal. Perhaps indeed, its most important consequence, under present circumstances, is that the President of the United States no longer speaks with the authority which should rightly be his.

Those, however, who believe that Mr Nixon is exaggerating in his sombre view of the future might profit by reading the current issue of the

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American quarterly journal, *Foreign Affairs*, which conveniently provides one with, as it were, a bird's-eye view of the main areas of political conflict in the world at the present time. The strongest single impression one derives from this survey is how profoundly the Arab-Israel war has shaken the balance of power (or, rather, of superpower) on which, as things are, the peace and prosperity of the world depend. In the first place, the war itself provoked a confrontation between the two superpowers so naked and direct that it could only be resolved by placing the military forces of the United States on military alert; by so doing, it weakened the basis of the entire policy of *détente* on which Mr Nixon and Dr Kissinger have staked their hopes of peace. In the second place, the nuclear threat was invoked by the United States in such a manner, without consultation with her allies, as to undermine the basis of cooperation between the United States and Western Europe; in Europe's eyes, American nuclear power became a source not of security but of danger. Thirdly, Europe's response to the threat of an Arab oil embargo was of such a kind as to threaten both the internal unity of the European Economic Community and its co-operation with the United States; Dr Kissinger, complaining that Europeans had behaved as if NATO did not exist, is reported to have said: "I don't care what happens to NATO, I m so disgusted. . . ." Fourthly, the decision of the Arab states to take full political and economic advantage of their oil resources represented a fundamental weakening in the position of all the major industrial countries of the world, and to this deterioration they have responded, not by strengthening the ties of solidarity between them, but by seeking their own political advantage.

All this, one might say, followed from one minor war in the desert. No one can say what further consequences might ensue if the war were to break out again, and it is not surprising if one begins to detect a certain sense of desperation and exhaustion in Dr Kissinger's attempts to restore a position that threatens to crumble away day by day. But the consequences of the Yom Kippur War have already thrown the West into greater disarray than it has experienced in the last thirty years, and so far at least it shows no sign of a united will to mend its ranks. The only statesman in the world who can derive any solid satisfaction from such a situation is Mr Brezhnev. Though of course one mustn't forget Mr Crossman.

R

A Personal Footnote

"In addition, he will give you seven women, skilled in the fine crafts, Lesbians whom he chose for their exceptional beauty...."

THE ILIAD, Book 9.

Nobody has ever offered
to give *me* seven Lesbians—
though I was once a warrior
for six long years,
slept in a tent too
on a sparse camp bed.

Somehow I missed the
spoils of the cities.
I was not important.
A silly Lieutenant
can't sulk and get
away with it

like grandiose Achilles.

Gavin Ewart

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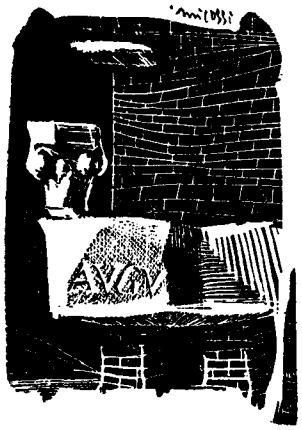
NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Morocco

Between Mao & Mohammed



A WHOLE ROW of heads was to be seen in the dock in Kunaitra courtroom—157 to be exact. The senior of these poor miscreants was aged over eighty, his mountain peasant's face tanned by wind and weather, his bare shoulders protruding from a torn *galabiya*. Beside him were highly intellectual physiognomies—barristers, leaders of the left-wing UNFP (*Union Nationale des Forces Populaires*) opposition, a surgeon dressed in white as if straight from the operating theatre. Between them were juvenile *fellahin*, for whom the judge's questions had to be translated into Berber because they understood no Arabic. There were also officials, schoolteachers, and seven officers. Like the Skirat assassins of July 1971 or the attackers of the royal Boeing in August 1972, all faced the death sentence for high treason.

Yet their crimes had been mere trifles: on the 3rd of March, the anniversary of the accession, an attack had been made on a country police station. Bombs had been thrown in the theatre in Rabat and at the U.S. Consul-General's car (they did not explode). A nest of guerrillas had been found in the gorges on the edge of the Sahara. It was all very dilettante, "made in Libya and Paris", hardly worth talking about, dealt with by the gendarmerie in a couple of days—yet cause for deeper anxiety. And why? Because this was not the work of some palace clique; it was the work of "the people", the peasants, little fellows, the stream in which, according to Mao, revolutionaries swim. Saved yet again, Hassan really has the devil's own luck.

I set off to look for the remnants of the guerrilla group and in one of the picturesque valleys near Goulmina, so remote that few tourists ever venture there. I was greeted by a host of yelling youngsters. They came tumbling out of a small brand-new school building, each swinging a long loaf of French bread. They surrounded my car and started begging, not for money but—for old newspapers! *"We read French"*, they said proudly. Their *baguettes* were provided free by the government for the children of poor people—bread and milk in the morning, bread with fish or cheese at mid-day. The schoolmaster lived in a roomy white-washed house with rough mud facing. I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw a huge portrait of Nasser hanging beside one of King Hassan.

"A great man who did much for his people", the young man said as he saw me gazing at Nasser. "Yes", I said, "he deposed that corrupt King Farouk." Silence. We squatted on the floor.

"King Hassan is a good man", the schoolmaster said finally, after pouring out for me a cup of strong sweet mint tea. "There are divided opinions about that", I said, "Have you seen the men of the desert?"

He shook his head. "They had better not show their faces here", he said. "It is senseless to revolt against the King. Hassan is not to blame for the fact that our country is poor. He is a clever man and tries to rule as best he can. But how can he do that if all his officials and all his ministers are thieves. While the French were here the officers of *Affaires indigènes* kept a strict eye on the village headmen. Today everyone is lining his own pocket as fast as he can. Even if the King distributed thousands of acres of land to the poor peasants, do you think any of the poor devils would in fact get anything? Only if they could slip the *Chef de Cercle* (in other words, the landowner), a couple of thousand—*C'est comme ça. . . .*"

"THAT'S THE WAY IT IS." This fatalist phrase runs through every conversation in Morocco. In the students' club of Marrakesh College I saw them rehearsing a play written by the students themselves. It was called *The Unemployed.* (Of the four million Moroccans capable of earning their living a quarter while away their time in shanty towns on the edge of the cities.) This was Gorky *à la Marocaine.* Neither the play itself nor its presentation were masterpieces but it provided a shattering commentary on the social despair from which the thinking young generation in this country is suffering. *Act I* showed an area leader appointed by the Government trying to disperse a gang of unemployed and being received by them with scorn and derision. *Act II*

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was about a barber who owed his landlord seven months' rent for his shop. Instead of paying, he bribed the area leader who thereupon clapped the landlord in jail on some trivial charge. In Act III a well-groomed young man promised the unemployed good wages and collected an expectant crowd around him. At this point he cynically produced a placard announcing that "*Coca-Cola is good for you.*" It was all a publicity gambit. In Act IV the unemployed formed a People's Court which, with symbolic sarcasm, tried and hanged the corrupt area leader.

The next play (so Abdullah, the youthful author, told me), would be about the fate of the indigent student. Admittedly anyone in Morocco who passes the matriculation examination has, theoretically at least, a right to a grant and a place in the State-run students' hostels. But since in this case, too, bribery is what opens the doors, these privileges, basically meant for the poor, are in fact enjoyed by the bourgeoisie. When a society is rotten to the core and based upon exploitation of the weak by the strong, can responsibility be laid at any single door, even that of the King? Abdullah was more politically conscious than the little school-teacher in the Sahara. In his eyes the Monarchy is merely part and parcel of a feudal system with a veneer of modernity which is throwing the country to the wolves of foreign capital.

THE FACT THAT THE YOUNG INTELLECTUALS are dedicated to Revolution (Abdullah's estimate that 90% of them are so may be an exaggeration) is indubitably shown by the strikes, sit-ins, and other disturbances with which Rabat University has been plagued almost continuously for a year now. Eventually the Philosophy Faculty was closed and this acted as a shot across the bows of the other faculties, bringing them to their senses. Opinions among the academic rebels differ widely as to what they really want. Abdullah acknowledges himself as a passionate worshipper of the Prophet Mohammed, whose precepts can undoubtedly be interpreted as prescribing a change in the order of society. He gets on very well with his Communist fellow-students who always ostensibly pay proper respect to religion. With the Maoists, however, he is engaged in bitter polemics; they, he declared to me in tones of the deepest disgust, systematically hurl mud at Islam and even at the Prophet himself.

THE MOROCCAN OPPOSITION is united in theory but divided in practice, all the more so since ideological divisions are curiously blurred. Anyone reading *L'Opinion*, the newspaper of *Istiqlal*, the former Independence movement, might think that he was dealing with radicals of a socialist Left; they are really more at home, however, in the *UNFP*, the breakaway group which has now been banned for four months and fills many of the places in the dock at Kuneitra. The newspaper may inveigh against the rich indigenous bourgeoisie who have inherited position and property from the French colonists. It forgets, however, that these *nouveaux-riches* are the props of the Party; and it is forced to adopt a conservative attitude, however much it may mouth socialist phrases. Al-Fassi, its aged leader and the hero of Independence, lives in a luxurious house in Rabat which (as rumour has it), was a present from the King, for the King, with the skill of the professional politician, knows how to use his favour or disfavour to manoeuvre the upstart challengers and play them off against each other. Admittedly, after the carnage of Skirat, in an access of agitated self-criticism he promised to revise his methods of government. But anyone who expected that he would try to democratise his autocracy by cooperating with the political parties was guilty of self-deception. Admittedly the political worthies were invited to re-enter the charmed circle of the ministerial council but the monarch never even dreamed of meeting their conditions or allowing them any genuine say in the proceedings. Would not sinecure appointments be enough? As any Westerner would expect, these French-trained lawyers politely declined.

Any Westerner is also inclined to throw up his arms in astonishment at the lack of perception shown by this ruler on a tottering throne, at this wild merry-go-round of power in which the King arbitrarily changes carousel horses with such rapidity that any coherent policy barely seems possible. Those who know this country well, however, are not so sure that King Hassan is really as hidebound as world-wide criticism of him would have us believe. This is a country where politics are still really conducted in the harem, by dynastic alliances between the Royal House and the established élite, by a clique held together by family and personal ties.

In this situation parties based on ideology are unreal shadowy entities, so much so that the reporter is unable to discover the actual size of their membership. Why, our more knowledgeable friends ask, should it have been army officers who rebelled against their royal benefactor? The answer is that, schooled in the French tradition, they had learnt to think logically—and therefore "wrongly."

THE GOLD-BRAIDED FEW who escaped King Hassan's avenging firing-squad have meanwhile been banished to harmless administrative posts.

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The forces at home are commanded by a "Colonel-major"—a newly-invented rank. The last commanding general, with the halo of an anti-Israel national hero round his head, has been despatched to far-off Syria with a Moroccan contingent, a gesture which not only relieved the King of threats from his praetorian guard but satisfied the Pan-Arab nationalist yearnings of the younger generation.

To counter the theory that the King is set in his ways it should be stated that, although he still retains a fatalist confidence in his own charisma, he himself has become Westernised to a truly shocking degree. He has, for instance, simply abolished the ritual pomp and circumstance in which his father, Mohammed V, used to ride to the mosque every Friday. He received a deputation of old and respected tribal chieftains from the Sahara on the edge of his swimming pool, dressed in bathing trunks. His sister, Princess Leila Aisha, marched about the luxurious halls of the Mamounia in Marrakesh in a pair of tattered blue-jeans. Such evidence of royal hippydom is calculated to raise more than merely conservative eyebrows. Such cynically provocative actions are evidence of a deep-rooted sense of instability between theocracy and secularism and, the more the French language and Cartesian style penetrate into the desert through the elementary schools, the more will this become the hallmark of the whole new élite.

NATIONALISM IS VERY OFTEN no more than the reaction to such a sense of instability. When the King expels the last foreigners from their homesteads or forces them to accept Moroccan citizens as partners in their industries or businesses, he does so from necessity, not from his own inclination; his purpose is to take the wind out of his opponents' propaganda sails. Even when he refers to the formation of co-operatives on the confiscated estates, such "socialism" must be taken with a grain of salt. Previous attempts of this nature have generally ended in peculation and those cynics who merely anticipate further enrichment of the bourgeoisie from this last wave of Moroccanisation are perhaps not far wrong.

The question is whether such self-perpetuating injustice and the glaring contrast between the very poor and the very rich are leading the country straight to revolution. After talking to the leaders of the *Union Marocaine du Travail*, the powerful trade union organisation of ultra-left wing tendencies in Casablanca, I have my doubts.

"We are a poor country", Abderrazak Mohammed, the deputy Secretary-General, told me. "And yet no one here starves. Everyone gets help from his family or other communities. Hectic industrialisation, presupposing the involvement of foreign capital, could only do us harm. Let us develop slowly—we can afford it. . . ." When the general staff of revolution, which should be pressing with clenched teeth towards the dawn of a new future, gives vent to such conservative arguments, it is worth keeping one's ears open.

Peter Schmid

"Black Myths"

The Propagandist's Propaganda

By George Martelli

IN some recent correspondence in *The Times* I challenged a claim by R. H. S. Crossman in *The Times* that "subversive operations and black propaganda were the only aspects of the war at which we achieved real pre-eminence." Without wishing to belittle the genuine achievements of our propagandists I suggested that to rate these above the achievements of the Battle of Britain, the Battle of the Atlantic, El Alamein and the landing in Normandy, was outrageous and dangerous nonsense. After a number of letters had appeared, mostly in protest against mine, the last word was given to Major-General Sir Alec Bishop (who succeeded Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart as Director-General of the Political Warfare Executive).

He wrote that Crossman's claim did not "stand up" and added:

> "I doubt whether the morale of the enemy forces was much affected by our activities, though I think we did have a considerable influence on the populations of the occupied countries, and to a lesser extent on the civilian population of Germany. The main credit for this goes to the European Service of the B.B.C. under Sir John Beresford Clark, whose broadcasts achieved a unique reputation for accuracy and objectivity and were therefore believed."

Now that the dust of this controversy has died down it may be useful to attempt an objective assessment of what the "Fourth Arm," as it is sometimes called, really did achieve.

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There was, of course, nothing new about it. Political Warfare—or "Psychological Warfare," as the Americans prefer to call it—is probably as old as war itself. The war dance of primitive tribesmen was intended both to encourage their own side and to demoralise the enemy by striking terror into his heart. Cromwell in Ireland deliberately practised atrocities at Drogheda in order to demoralise the remaining rebel garrisons and induce them to surrender. In modern times, however, propaganda as a legitimate military weapon of war only received official recognition during the First World War. The first leaflets to be dropped from the air were launched over the German lines as early as the autumn of 1914. But they were not followed up, and when the Germans threatened to punish any pilots they captured this method was abandoned in favour of balloons. By the end of the War these were delivering 100,000 leaflets daily over the enemy trenches, explaining the hopelessness of the German military situation and urging the troops to surrender.

FRONT-LINE PROPAGANDA was left to the army, and it was not until February 1918 (when Lord Northcliffe was appointed Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries) that the British Government began to take political warfare seriously. Northcliffe's department, run by a distinguished committee and organised regionally, achieved considerable success, notably against the Austrians. The old Hapsburg Empire contained a majority of "subject peoples" (including Poles, Czecho-Slovaks, Southern Slavs and Rumanians) who were anti-German and longed to be free of their Austrian masters. But to encourage them to defect—which they did in large numbers, especially on the Italian front—it was necessary to promise them their independence after the War; and it was thus that the needs of propaganda, to some extent, came to dictate Allied policy.

Similarly, it was the ideas of H. G. Wells—who was in charge for a time of the German section at Crewe House (where Northcliffe's organisation was set up)—conceived primarily for the purposes of propaganda, that largely prevailed with the British Government and the other Allied Governments when they were considering the kind of peace they intended to impose after victory. In a masterly memorandum of historic importance, Wells pointed out that it was useless to tell the Germans to throw out their military leaders and sue for peace unless you could hold out some hope of a better future for Germany if they did so. He then proceeded to propound a whole set of principles which he considered the Allies should proclaim if they wished their propaganda to be effective. Many were in fact adopted and became the basis of Allied policy at the peace conference. They included the setting up of a "League of Free Nations," to which Germany after purging herself of aggressive imperialism would be admitted; the concept of a concert of Great Powers (later embodied in the Council of the League) to keep the peace; limitation of armaments; a World Court of International Justice; self-determination for the countries of Central Europe; and the creation of trusteeships for the former German colonies pending the "ultimate release and liberation" of all colonial peoples. The memorandum was in fact a blueprint for the "brave new world" which the victorious nations now persuaded themselves they were fighting for, but was conceived originally and mainly as a talking point in the "hot air" war.

Its effectiveness as propaganda had—unfortunately—another result, which neither its author nor anybody else had foreseen. The Germans were persuaded that they had been defeated by blockade and propaganda, that their army had never been beaten but was "stabbed in the back"; and this belief, sedulously cultivated by the military hierarchy, had not a little to do with the rise of Hitler and outbreak of the second World War.

This myth, as such it was, being flattering to the propagandists, was also cultivated in Britain. The result was that on the opening of hostilities in 1939 all the plans were laid for conducting intense political warfare, and high expectations were placed on it. With Northcliffe's circus as a model, his deputy in the first War, Sir Campbell Stuart (author of *Secrets of Crewe House*) was put in charge of the secret department, known as the Political Warfare Executive (P.W.E.), for conducting clandestine, or "black", propaganda, set up at Woburn Abbey, the Bedfordshire seat of the Dukes of Bedford. There in the first weeks of that warm September gathered the fervent band of officials, journalists, dons, advertising men, artists and technicians, with their female camp followers, who for the next five years were to devote themselves to undermining the morale of our enemies and sustaining that of our friends.

THE CHOICE OF A STATELY HOME—and that one of the largest and most conspicuous in England—as the headquarters of a secret organisation, was less than happy. It invited investigation by enemy agents and also exposed the denizens to the charge that, while London and other cities heroically withstood the *Blitz*, they lived comfortably in the country, away from bombs, and also remote from the realities of war and central control. After Rex Leeper, a Foreign Office career

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man, had succeeded Campbell Stuart as their chief, the political warriors were known as "Leeper's Sleepers." This was scarcely fair, since whatever their other shortcomings nobody could truthfully accuse them of being idle. Most of them were town dwellers to whom the Bedfordshire countryside offered little entertainment, and there was nothing for them to do especially after dark but remain busily scheming in their offices.

From their own point of view, however, the situation had certain advantages. It enabled them to labour in undisturbed peace, with nobody from other departments looking over their shoulder, and less interference from above. This naturally aroused suspicions, especially in the Foreign Office, which had an overall responsibility for propaganda policy, and as the War went on there was mounting pressure to bring the whole outfit back to London (which Leeper, as long as he was there, successfully resisted).

As in the First World War under Northcliffe, the organisation was divided into regions. There were sections for Germany, Italy, France, the Low Countries, and the Balkans, each with a Regional Head. As far as the Occupied Countries were concerned the main task of the propagandists was to encourage the local resistance movements, and this was done in close cooperation with P.W.E.'s sister organisation, the Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.) which supplied the movements with weapons and sent agents to assist and coordinate them.

The two main activities at Woburn were the production of leaflets to be dropped by the R.A.F., and the establishment and running of clandestine broadcasting stations. Since the former was really a "white," or overt, undertaking which was eventually separated from the "black," it need not concern us here. It is by the success or otherwise of its clandestine broadcasting that our "black" propaganda must be judged.

THE OXFORD DICTIONARY defines "clandestine" as "done secretly, kept quiet." Our "black" stations were certainly this, but they were kept secret not from the enemy but from the British public. The former was not deceived, since it was inconceivable even by the stupidest German that, for example, a radio purporting to be operated from Calais by a dissident group of German officers could be what it seemed—could be anything in fact but a clumsy British trick. It was quite as inconceivable as it would have been for an anti-Churchill and anti-War group of British politicians to set up their own broadcasting station at Dover with a view to overthrowing the Government and making peace with Hitler. The best such propaganda could hope to do was to sow doubt and confusion in simple minds. It could tell them things about the War and about conditions in Germany which they would not otherwise hear, and which, being based on first-class intelligence, had an uncanny accuracy and gave the impression that there were enemies in their midst who, whether British or German, were omniscient.

But the great advantage of "black" propaganda was that, like the Secret Service, it could do things which the Government would not publicly avow, and for which, if they came out, it could disclaim responsibility. This gave it a freedom denied to the official media, such as the B.B.C., whose every word was scrutinised lest it either expose the Government to criticism at home or committed it to policies abroad which it was not prepared to adopt. Thus, for instance, it was possible to introduce a "blue" element into the "black" broadcasts, such as discussion of the sexual habits of Nazi bosses, without running the risk of protest by the Churches or other puritans.

As scriptwriters, translators, and speakers, P.W.E. had to employ a large number of expatriates from a dozen nationalities. These were accommodated in comfortable country houses in the neighbourhood of Woburn, where the Regional Heads or their assistants acted as hosts and guardians, usually with their wives doing the housekeeping. It was a cosy arrangement in which "shop" was the constant subject of conversation, but the atmosphere was somewhat claustrophobic. Most of the expatriates were sincere men who had been driven from or left their native lands for political reasons. But they could not forget that they were working for a foreign power, and this made them touchy and on their guard against anything that offended their patriotic or ideological conscience.

Although party politics were officially in abeyance for the duration of the War and there was a coalition government, the political prejudices of the propagandists soon made themselves felt. While there was no official bias either to Left or Right, individual members of P.W.E., as of the European Service of the B.B.C. conducting "white" propaganda, tended on the whole to be on the Left. This was partly for the reason that while conservative intellectuals like Evelyn Waugh were drawn to the armed forces, their more progressive contemporaries such as Graham Greene were prone to man the ministries. The prospect of exercising power as a civil servant, if only temporarily, was especially attractive to socialists, who saw in it an opportunity to play some part in shaping the future according to their ideals. It is also true that many of them, mostly journalists, had specialised

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knowledge of foreign countries, which made them more useful as propagandists than as soldiers. Finally, there was the fact that at the beginning of the War the Department for Propaganda to Enemy and Enemy-Occupied Countries was placed under the aegis of a socialist politician, Dr Hugh Dalton, Minister of Economic Warfare.

As a result of these various factors there was a somewhat naïve belief at Woburn that the way to undermine the strength of the enemy was to appeal to his "democratic elements" and to the revolutionary spirit of "the Workers." A prime example of this mentality was the *Sender der Europaischen Revolution* (Radio of the European Revolution) operated by a group of German Marxists under the supervision of Dick Crossman who (with his wife Zita) presided over the house in which they lived. The fact that the Germans, including probably a majority of "the Workers," had put Hitler in power, would have made this "Freedom Radio" counter-productive (that is, had it ever been heard). It is true that it was balanced by a right-wing station conducted by a former *Reichstag* deputy of Brüning's Centre party; but that soon packed up leaving the Marxists in possession of the field.

Similarly, the first Italian "Freedom" station to go on the air was run on strictly conventional, classical anti-fascist lines. It was manned by an old-fashioned liberal brought up in the ideals of the *Risorgimento,* an ardent young socialist, and an Anglophile journalist; and it preached the doctrines and appealed to the sentiments which for nearly twenty years had sustained the faith of the exiles from Mussolini's Italy but which had long since been rejected by the mass of Italians. Although the rejection, as the subsequent history of Italy suggests, was not necessarily permanent, in the meantime what was required was a language and an approach more in tune with the Italians' existing modes of thought.

IN CONTRAST were the highly successful broadcasts in the Italian service of the B.B.C., spoken by Colonel Harold Stevens, but devised and written by a brilliant Triestino Jew, Signor Claudio Cassuto. These never attacked the Fascist régime directly, or used expressions alien to the mentality of a people who had presumably accepted right-wing dictatorship as the lesser of evils. They were always urbane and objective, but they harped on things, such as food shortages and the entry into the war of America, which it was known were worrying the Italians. By the time that Italy was ready to surrender, Colonel Stevens' audience was immense.

When, however, it was proposed by the head of the Italian Region at Woburn to start a second "Freedom Station" run by an ex-Fascist and purporting to represent a dissident Fascist group in favour of a separate peace, the idea was turned down as politically too risky. It was feared that the Press might get hold of it, that there would be questions in the House, or that the other Italians would resign and campaign against it. Some of them were already in touch with influential people outside, who were ready to pounce on any departure from the orthodox anti-fascist line.

IT WAS LEFT TO A NEWCOMER, and one whose powerful personality breathed (or rather blew) fresh life into our "black" propaganda, to put the same idea into practice in regard to Germany. This was Sefton ("Tom") Delmer, a Beaverbrook journalist, who had been brought up in Berlin, spoke German like a native, and had made a study of the Nazis as a reporter for the *Express.* Recruited for P.W.E. early in 1941 and invited to set up a right-wing German "Freedom Station", Delmer has described how he went about it in a book of memoirs entitled *Black Boomerang* (1962), which is one of two important sources for a history of P.W.E., the other being a biographical work by its Director-General, Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, called *Comes The Reckoning* (1947).

Delmer's recipe, as he describes it, was to

> "appeal to the inner pig-dog inside every German in the name of his patriotic ideals; give him a patriotic reason for doing what he would like to do from self-interest, talk to him about his *Führer* and his Fatherland, and at the same time inject some item of news into his mind which will make him think, and if possible act, in a way that is contrary to the efficient conduct of Hitler's war."

To act the part of speaker he invented a die-hard of the old Prussian school who was supposedly head of a "clandestine military organisation sending cyphered instructions to its secret cells all over occupied Europe." Thus any German who listened in would get the impression that he was eavesdropping and would be intrigued by what he heard: a caustic and salacious commentary on what was going on in the inner Nazi circle, spiced with inside information and revealing the speaker as "loyal and devoted to the *Führer* but scathingly contemptuous of the rabble that had seized control of the Fatherland in his name." This character was always introduced as *"Der Chef"*—the title by which the members of his immediate entourage sometimes referred to Hitler—and the name given to the station was *"Gustav Siegfried Eins"*, which were the German equivalent of the signaller's code *"George Sugar One"* and lent itself to several interpretations, such as General Staff 1, or Secret Transmitter 1.

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Although the transmissions, being on short wave, had only a small chance of being picked up, there was soon evidence (according to Delmer) that they had won a large audience in Germany, and in support of this he cites as witness Dr Paul Schmidt, Hitler's Foreign Office interpretor, who in a book of reminiscences, *Der Statist auf der Gallerie* (Bonn 1951), described *"G.S.1"* as the "cleverest propaganda from the British side" and wrote that among several theories held by Germans as to the identity and location of *Der Chef* one was that he operated from a barge on Berlin's River Spree!

Whether or not the Germans were quite so credulous, the success of the new venture, which at least had the merit of originality, not only made Delmer's name as a propagandist, but also put P.W.E. on the map. The Services' high-ups, who had been sceptical and resentful of the more exaggerated claims made by the political warriors, began to revise their views and became more willing to cooperate by feeding them information and letting them into their plans. The Admiralty especially took an interest in Delmer and suggested to him the creation of a new station aimed specifically at the crews of U-boats. Known as the *"Atlantiksender"* this came into operation early in 1943, using a 600 kW. transmitter on medium wave, the most powerful in Europe, prised from the B.B.C.

This was followed by others, notably *Soldatsender Calais,* which was intended to soften resistance in advance of the Normandy landing by driving a wedge between the *Wehrmacht* and the Party, and was also used for "intruding" on German stations when they went off the air during bombing. Further developments were a religious and even an astrological station.

In 1943, having taken over the Italian section of P.W.E., Delmer set up *Radio Livorno,* purporting to be operated from a warship in Livorno harbour, chiefly for the purpose of preventing the Italian Fleet from falling into German hands. His claim that it was on orders issued from this station in Bedfordshire that the Fleet weighed anchor and sailed from Malta to surrender to the British (when, in fact, the order was issued by the new Prime Minister, Marshal Badoglio, in the name of the King of Italy as Commander of the Armed Forces) is the one statement in Delmer's book which casts doubt on his credibility in other respects. Whether or not the station was listened to, it is inconceivable that Italian officers would have been taken in by it, or if they guessed, as Delmer suggests, that the messages came from the British, would have acted on them without the sanction of their own highest authority. On the other hand, none of those whom I interviewed at the time had ever heard of it.

THIS INCIDENT notwithstanding, there is no doubt that Delmer's performance on the "black" side was one of the two outstanding contributions to victory made by propaganda, the other being the European News Service of the B.B.C. Delmer knew the Germans; he was a good psychologist; he was not hampered by moral or ideological scruples; he had the personality to impose his plans on others, and the energy to carry them out. It is not paying him too high a compliment to say that he was an artist at his job.

A useful if minor role was also played by front-line leaflets, for which, although they were "white," P.W.E. was responsible. Their object was to induce the enemy to surrender sooner than he would have done otherwise, but they were only effective when troops were already demoralised, either by intensive bombing (as at Pantellaria) or by military reverses (as in Tunisia and Sicily).

An important branch of "black" activity was deception—that is persuading the enemy you were going to attack him where you had no such intention—and some very big claims have been made for this. The best known is put forward in E. S. Montagu's book, *The Man Who Never Was* (1953), which describes the planting on German Intelligence of false plans and documents found with the body of a British officer washed up on the Spanish coast. The object of the exercise was to convince the Germans that after the fall of Tunisia the next targets of the Allies were Greece and Sardinia, and not Sicily. However in a recent article in *An Cosantoir,* journal of the Eire Army, General Warlimont, who was with Hitler at the time, shows convincingly that he was not so deceived.

HOW GREAT OR LITTLE was the total contribution of propaganda to victory it is impossible for anyone to say. It is perhaps significant, although not conclusive, that in their respective accounts of the war neither Winston

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Churchill nor Anthony Eden makes any reference to it, and that Harold Macmillan, in the volume of his memoirs covering the period, has only one mention of it when he writes: "Propaganda can be a splendid means of exploiting victory, but it must follow, not precede, victory."[1] The truth is that ministers were too busy with other matters. Had they taken more interest in propaganda they might have avoided some mistakes—for instance, the insistence on "unconditional surrender", which probably delayed the end of the War and certainly played into Russia's hands. The propagandists indeed had much less influence on policy in the second World War than in the first.

[1] Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War* (1967), p. 376.

There is no doubt, however, that Macmillan put his finger on it. Our propaganda only began to "bite" with the Italians after the loss of Tripoli, and with the Germans after Stalingrad and when we began to get the better of them in the Battle of the Atlantic. It is when for the first time he has to envisage the possibility of defeat that the enemy becomes susceptible to suggestion. Most of the effort deployed by P.W.E. before the tide turned at Alamein could have been dispensed with without any great loss. The same could be said of subversive operations which, in spite of the heroism of our agents, until the German retreat began had insignificant military value and merely exposed the population to savage reprisals.

To make any greater claim for either is to distort history.

The Quest for Cundum

By Gordon Lee

THIS, if you like, is a dirty story. It began, as all such stories should, in a perfectly respectable way. I have a friend, Andrew Boyd, who is preparing a selective gazetteer of the world's place names, a *Where's Where* to stand alongside *Who's Who*. Being both meticulous and witty, my friend is the ideal compiler of what might be called essential trivia. For variety's sake he will fill in the *Times* crossword sometimes with his right hand and sometimes his left. He might be said to have an ambidextrous mind.

See him, then, marching briskly through the letter *C*. Before he reached Constantinople (*see: Istanbul*), he came across a French town called Condom. Praying in aid the *Oxford Atlas*, he dispelled my disbelief. The town lies about 75 miles south-east of Bordeaux in the Department of Gers. Its principal trade appears to be in Armagnac, first cousin to Cognac. Both are stimulants and, possibly for some, aphrodisiacs.

Suitably stimulated, my friend further discovered that Condom is in sheep country. At which point a small light dawned. For, in one of his trips to New Zealand, he had been told in the second most southerly city of the world, Invercargill, that lamb bungs were exported not only as sausage skins but as contraceptives—"French letters" to the English, *capotes anglaises* to the French, and "condoms" to the Americans. In particular they enjoy a ready sale in the Bible Belt of the southern United States, where, apparently, it is sinful to take one's pleasure clad in an unnatural, manufactured rubber product but perfectly legitimate to don a natural, God-given lamb bung—even if it comes from Invercargill and not Wyoming.[1]

Like Archimedes, my friend sprang from his seat if not his bath. He had found it—the perfect, tight-as-a-drum explanation. Condom, it was as plain as a pikestaff, took its name from this French town where some unsung genius had discovered that sheep guts had other, more interesting uses than wrapping up sausage meat. The English, it was equally plain, had let the word drop out of circulation, while in their own sly way still obliquely giving some credit where credit is due by the use of the adjective "French." The Americans—often conservative in verbal, if not sexual usage—had, on the other hand, clung to the old form.

ALAS. BEFORE SPRINGING this notable discovery on the unsuspecting world, my friend tried it out on me. I was not, even he would grant, sceptical. But, perhaps as he intended I should, I sought confirmation. I turned first to other friends, knowledgeable in manner and customs American. They pleaded total ignorance. If they were ignorant, I asked myself, would the United

[1] Another view of the matter is put by Elizabeth Draper in her Pelican book on *Birth Control in the Modern World* (1965) where she says:

> The luxury market in condoms is still, and very expensively, supplied by the use of animal membrane, which is said to interfere less with sensation because it conducts heat better.

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States Information Service (*c/o* the American Embassy, Grosvenor Square) be any less so? Or, on being asked, would one of its prim minions think that I was one of those who get their kicks by breathing heavily down the phone? I contemplated the sorry fate of other earnest seekers after truth and gave some passing thought to Anglo-American relations.

I turned, instead, to *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* compiled by Eric Partridge. It is a reputable work of scholarship which, published in a less permissive age than our own, prints some four-letter words with the use of asterisks. And there the entry was: "Condom is a variant of cundum." Eagerly, I turned to *cundum*. There Partridge, it seemed, put paid to the French and their sheep for good. In talking of English overcoats, the French, apparently, had got it right and the English, with their "French letters", wrong. Cundum, like cricket, was, according to Partridge, an English invention. His definition, slightly abridged, runs as follows:

> (1) *Circa* 1665–1820, a form of safety sheath (*cf.* French letter), *ex* the name of its deviser, a Colonel of the Guards. In 1667 those three aristocratic courtiers, wits and poets, Rochester, Roscommon and Dorset, issued *A Panegyric upon Cundum.*
> (2) A false scabbard over a sword.
> (3) Likewise *ex* sense 1, the oil-skin case for holding the colours of a regiment.

IT SOUNDED plausible enough to be true. Seemingly, one of those worthy military pioneers of Good King Charles's Golden Days had done his stuff and had been suitably eulogised and, one hopes, rewarded. The dates looked about right, for "sheaths", more as a protection against venereal disease than as contraceptives, were used in the 18th century by such roués as Casanova and Boswell. And for a man of military resource and ingenuity it was not a far step from the ceremonial casing of the colours to a more intimate casing for less ceremonious purposes—or, for that matter, to the sheathing of a sword, often, at that time, exposed metaphorically in the bedchamber as well as literally on the field of battle.

But, like a terrier, I smelt rat. Had Partridge been taken in? Had Rochester, Roscommon, and Dorset invented Colonel Cundum? Who better, for their purposes, as a deviser of a guard than a Colonel in the Guards? Were they the true and only begetters of the word *cundum*?

There was only one thing to do. That was to discover whether, indeed, there had ever been a Colonel Cundum. I turned first to that mine of historical information, the War Office Library. There, I assumed, they would be used to the Colonel and to his origins and inventions,

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answering a question about him at least once a year.

Not a bit of it. Delightedly, they admitted that they had never been asked to find the Colonel. Nor they added, even more gleefully, had they ever been informed of his connection with the arts of war and love. Off they hastened to the predecessor of the Army List, Dalton's volumes. Alack, they confessed, no officer of the name of Cundum appeared in Dalton's lists. But they added that Dalton was not complete and that they believed that the Brigade of Guards took pride in preserving lists of all the officers who had served in its regiments since the Year Dot. They made me promise faithfully to bring the good news from the West End to Whitehall if I should ever track the elusive Colonel down.

By this time my blood was up; and I had a Partridge in my sights. So, next, I phoned the Guards Museum at Wellington Barracks. There, with all that establishment's usual courtesy, I was informed that the museum did not keep such lists but that the various regiments did. I then considered the prospect of long and intricate telephone calls to the Record Offices of the Grenadier, Coldstream, and even possibly Scots Guards. I chickened out. I decided to enlist the services of an old-boy network.

I LAID THE FRUITS of my research at the feet of the Brigadier, an officer in the Cavalry, by way of being a friend of mine. There followed one of those long silences usually—but not in this instant altogether appropriately—described as pregnant.

It was finally broken by what with propriety can only be described as the Cavalry equivalent of "You must be joking." But, never having been known to refuse a fence, the Cavalry cantered off after Cundum. Seven days later the Cavalry confessed failure.

I THEN CAST MY NET in the direction of what was once the London Rubber Company (now, somewhat coyly, renamed LRC International). In their turn, they directed my attention to the Sexology shelves of a leading Soho bookshop where, as they predicted, I found a book entitled *The Curious History of Contraception* by Shirley Green.

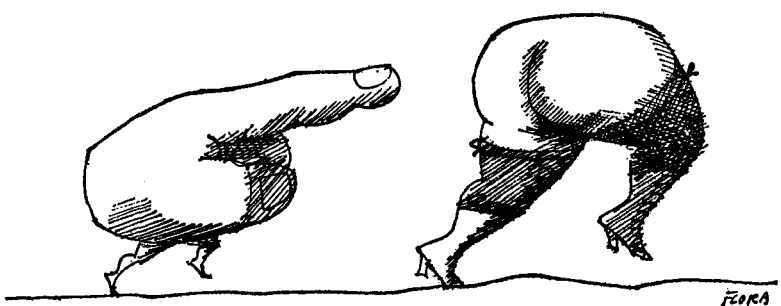
The book lacks penetration. But it confirmed that animal intestines had been put to curious uses. It suggested that a possibly mythical doctor, as opposed to a colonel, had brought the word condom to the fore.[2]

It showed that my friend's discovery of the town had been anticipated by a German scholar, who, however, was so unsure of his ground that he also suggested that the word might be derived from the Latin verb, *condire*, which means to pickle or to preserve. (That is the root of the word, condiment, defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as being "Anything of pronounced flavour used as a relish, or to stimulate the appetite.") Another German, according to Miss Green, went further back—to the Persians and their word *Kondu* or *Kendu*, a long intestine used for storing grain. Finally, the *Curious History* quoted a stanza from the *Panegyric* mentioned by Partridge.

So, the poem did exist. Turning my back on the military, I therefore took myself off to one of the greatest collections of books in the world, the London Library in St James's Square, in search of the poem and hence, following the flutter of a Partridge's wing, Rochester, Roscommon, and Dorset. But, to get at their collected works, I had to ask the librarians to delve into Safe 4 (where "we keep books of exceptional value") and the Librarian's Room (where "we keep books that some of our members may consider to be obscene").

The poem was there right enough, rather dull (and full of f's for s's). But, in it, there was no mention of the Guards, nor of an oil-skin casing for the colours, nor even a scabbard. Cundum "the wondrous pimp" certainly appeared as being "long since deceas'd" and in a footnote as being "Colonel Cundum who invented them; called so from his name." Not, it should be noted, as a Colonel of the Guards and not, indeed, as a Colonel at all except in a footnote which could have been added by anyone up to the point when the book was published in the second quarter of the 18th century. More-

[2] That suggestion is, guardedly, lent some support in the newest supplement (1973) to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, published after I had completed my labours.



Paul Flora in "Die Zeit" (Hamburg)

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over, the poem was not directly attributed to Rochester or his friends, and it was undated. It could, in fact, have been written by anyone at any time between 1660 and 1730.

REMEMBERING Partridge's firm attribution, my next step was to trace the poem and its author back in time. At that point I thought of another friend who happens to be a member of the Reading Room of the British Museum. He also happens to be a member of Her Majesty's Customs & Excise, who, on enquiry, revealed a profound knowledge of Rochester and his works (his interest having been first aroused when he discovered, 300 years later, that one of Rochester's poems still appears in the Customs' list of banned books). Before getting him totally enmeshed in the index and remoter shelves of the British Museum, I followed another scent which he, kind fellow that he is, had put before me.

He suggested that I should consult Peter Fryer's book, *The Birth Controllers* (1965). And there all, or nearly all, stood revealed. First, sheaths made of linen had been devised by the Dutch physician of Fallopian tube fame in the middle of the 16th century, *i.e.* long before Cundum had reared his head, ugly or otherwise. Second, Shirley Green was clearly deep in the debt of Mr Fryer's scholarly text and notes, and could be left unsullied on Soho's Sexology shelves. Third, the word condum first appeared in print in 1706 in a poem by a Scotsman and was then mentioned in *The Tatler* in May 1709. Fourth, the famous *Panegyric* was not written (as Partridge alleged) in 1667 by Rochester or Roscommon or Dorset but in 1723 or thereabouts by the son of a bishop who later himself became a rector, White Kennett. And finally came the utterly deflating sentence: "Much time and energy have been spent, and much ink spilt, in fruitless efforts to find out something about the supposed English inventor, or adapter, of this instrument, the eponymous Dr (or Colonel) Condom (or Condum, Condon or Conton)."

At that juncture, there seems to be nothing more to say but amen. But certain conclusions need emphasising before I withdraw, deflated, from the scene and hand the task over to others better equipped than I.

(1) Partridge has got it wrong. Why? Because, a quick piece of research showed, he had simply paraphrased an earlier book, published in the late 18th century, *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* by Captain Francis Grose. The military connection is worth noting; but Grose quotes no sources for his attribution.

(2) Condon appears to be the only surname still surviving of those listed by Fryer. What is its origin? In the dictionaries devoted to such subjects there seems to be a conspiracy of silence about Condon. The one clue is that it is probably Irish and may be derived from an Anglo-Norman settler. If so, has not the wheel turned full circle—for the town of Condom is in Gascony and some Gascons must surely have come over with the Normans to conquer both England and Ireland? And was not Gascony itself once part of the Kingdom of England?

(3) Further research into Dalton and the early Army lists is needed to discover whether between 1660 and 1720 there was a Colonel (not necessarily of the Guards, whether Foot or Horse) called Cundum, Condum, Condom, Condon or Conton. And if so, when? There were incidentally two Lieutenant Condons (or possibly only one) serving in the First Foot Guards in Tangier in 1664–65. But, Irish adventurers as they may have been, they appear briefly only to disappear without trace, unpromoted.

(4) There is still Grose's beguiling reference to the oil-skin casing for the colours. Is it yet another pun? Or did someone invent such a casing and was he called Cundum, Condon, etc? It would not require the wit of a bishop's son to transfer the word from one use to another. The rude, licentious soldiery would surely be fully capable of doing that.

SO, AT LEAST THREE possible lines for further research exist. But I have now to retire from the quest, in the modern rather than the older sense, spent. Others may care to go further. If so, my labours may have saved them from falling into the oldest trap of all in scholarship (or, for that matter, military intelligence), that is taking what appears to be a Grade A source—in this instance a Partridge—as entirely authoritative. Further, so aroused have I been by this chase that I am willing to offer a small, appropriate prize for he, or she, who finally proves (or disproves) the existence of Colonel Cundum (or Condon, etc.) at the right date, and who establishes some link between him and an oil-skin casing, if not a lamb bung.

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Monstrous Growths

Two Views of Disaster—By GEOFFREY STRICKLAND

MR IAN ROBINSON is a lecturer in English, the author of two books on Chaucer and one of the founding editors of *The Human World*, a journal which sets out in a number of ways to be a successor to F. R. Leavis's *Scrutiny* and to which Dr Leavis has been a fairly frequent contributor. Dr Mishan is a Reader in Economics, known perhaps best for his arguments against the necessity of economic growth, as set out in *The Costs of Economic Growth*, a work which inspired one of the main ideas behind *The Ecologist's* "Blueprint for Survival." Each has produced a book[1] from his own professional vantage point on the state of contemporary civilisation in Britain and, though both books appeared before the Arab oil embargo and the threatened drying-up of what one alarmed minister referred to as our "life-blood", both analyse what their authors see as a series of incipient national disasters—disasters which will not be averted in their view even if the "life-blood" flows again and the nation continues to "grow." Mishan, characteristically, makes it clear which issues he wants to raise and which he prefers to leave to others, and explicitly refrains from joining in the controversy over the depletion of non-renewable resources; while Robinson's *Human World* (no. 10, 1973) has denounced the "Blueprint for Survival" and the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* for offering few good reasons for thinking we shall not survive and fewer still for believing that we should. Both Mishan and Robinson are concerned with what politicians call "the quality of life" or what Robinson himself calls living as a human being, not just surviving; and both take issue with politicians of both major parties, with the media and the country's intellectual élite for having damaged so much of what is best in English life.

Of the two books it seems to me that Mishan's is the more convincingly as well as the more carefully argued. His quiet if sometimes passionate firmness contrasts agreeably with Robinson's untiring pugnaciousness, his tendency to sermonise, and an earnestness which is at times self-intoxicating. Mishan uses as far as possible the arguments of classical economics, and though his work is a revelation to non-economists like myself of the relevance of such arguments to areas of life which one would have thought lay completely outside their scope, the limitations of his approach are conscious and self-imposed, even when he goes outside economics and dwells explicitly on questions of general morality. That they are limitations, none the less, the contrast with Robinson makes clear. There is nothing in his book as adventurously imaginative as Robinson's chapters on the language of religion and love, and he speaks less intimately as well as less provocatively to the ordinary English reader about the life and vital assumptions he shares. The qualities he stands for may appear as a result to be mainly negative, whereas Robinson writes with what seems often genuine ardour from his experience as an Englishman old enough to remember Churchill and Gillie Potter on the B.B.C., to have read the "decent and imaginative *Wizard* and *Hotspur*" rather than the Rev. Marcus Morris's *Eagle*, to have received from his Noncomformist upbringing a knowledge of the Authorised Version, to have read English at Downing College with Dr Leavis and to have experienced something like veneration for the writings of Leavis himself, which he regards as the finest English prose of our time, and for those of his forerunner, Lawrence. Robinson's pieties, especially when they include Churchill and Gillie Potter, may have an irresistible attraction for many readers—I confess they have for me—and the preference I

[1] *The Survival of English: Essays in Criticism of Language*. By IAN ROBINSON. Cambridge University Press, £3.50. *Making the World Safe for Pornography and other Intellectual Fashions*. By E. J. MISHAN. Alcove Press, £3.75.

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share with him for the rapidly more distant world he evokes is not, I am sure, just nostalgia.[2] Robinson justifies it in his chapters on the appalling language of contemporary politics (and he speaks here with the authority of a man who has read Mr Wilson's memoirs), on *The Times*, which is now newsy where it was once informative, and on religious English where, despite his tendency to heckle his own quotations, he illustrates copiously the truth that God has been "mocked" by the language of *The New English Bible*, the reformed Liturgy and Book of Common Prayer, and that the language of contemporary Christianity in England is trite and lacking in all conviction.

This has been said before, of course, notably by Professor Gifford in a review in *Essays in Criticism* (vol. xi, 1961) which Robinson recommends. What Robinson contributes to the subject is a theory of language, which is also demonstrated in all the other chapters of the book and which, if I understand him correctly, allows him to talk a great deal of nonsense. The theory, backed up by quotations from Collingwood, Wittgenstein, Lawrence, Leavis and J. L. Austin, is that the common language enables one to know certain things with absolute certainty, such as that "murder just is, absolutely, wrong and there is no further reason. . . ." It is an "axiom" that the common language (*langue* or *langage*? We are never told) "embodies in all its speakers a common set of assumptions and values. . . ." and what is true of murder is equally true for Robinson of the whole language of Christian ethics, including sexual morality.

There seem to me at least two major objections to this view: the belief that what we call murder or adultery is unconditionally wrong can be defended by users of the common language only if they refer to something other than language—divine authority, for instance, or a belief in the virtues of conformity to the prevailing view. (And Robinson lends weight to one's suspicion that he is merely arguing for conformism by confessing disarmingly that he is not a Christian.) Even if it were true, moreover, that the common language were the word of God and an infallible guide to conduct, our knowledge that we were

[2] For all its perversities and confusions, this makes *The Survival of English* a much more lively and engrossing account of "the uses of literacy" than Richard Hoggart's best-seller of the late 1950s. Hoggart tries to suppress his nostalgia ("I have done what I could to remove its effects") and in doing so has removed a great deal of life and made both himself and his subject sound unnecessarily dreary. A not untypical passage tells us that the attitude of working people "towards promiscuous sex activity does come from a long way back. But for them it is all rather scrabbily hole-and-corner."

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using it correctly, that it *was* the common language, could not have equal certainty. Robinson appears to concede this point on page 20 but fails to see how completely this deprives him of the right to say on the page before: "I am not offering a method, only, I hope, an occasional illumination. Such as it is, however, any light thrown is infallible, for the meaning of language is our criterion of truth."

ROBINSON'S THEORY of language not only distracts one from all that is good in his book. It also betrays a lack of conviction and hence, in his sense of the word, "seriousness" in his assault on the modern world. People do, after all, as he is painfully aware, not only act but speak as though murder and adultery were not absolutely wrong; but, like Rousseau, he can attribute this only to the fact that in doing so they are not, in any sense he can recognise, "natural" or "human", two of his most commonly used terms. It is the lack of conviction, too, that seems to prompt him to drum up corroboration from so many eminent sources; from J. L. Austin, for instance, whose unfortunate defence of common parlance in "A Plea for Excuses" I have seen quoted as evidence that he was not concerned with philosophy: "Our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions that men have found worth drawing, and the connections they have found worth making, in the lifetime of many generations. . . ." (How could anyone possibly know that?) Austin may or may not have stood by it when challenged, but it is by no means sure that he would have approved of Robinson's gloss. Language for Robinson imposes limitations on our freedom which have the power of a religious taboo ("In the beginning was language . . .", he writes, paraphrasing St John and deliberately equating language in his sense with the Logos), while Austin's writings are a practical demonstration of the fact that conformity to common usage, far from restricting our freedom, is possible only through a more than common mastery of language and hence control over what one says. (Cf. also from "A Plea for Excuses", ". . . we need therefore to prise 'words' off the world, to hold them apart from it and against it, so that we can realise their inadequacies and arbitrariness, and can re-look at the world without blinkers. . . .")

Why Robinson should have needed to evolve this caricature of the thinkers he admires one can only guess, but I think a reason may lie in the need to justify a fear and dislike of the modern world. The fear and dislike are certainly nothing to be ashamed of, and some of the best parts of the book are those in which he candidly confesses to them, as in the chapter on pornography. But it is doubtful whether the evils of modern life will be exorcised by a moral absolutism as ill-founded and merely insistent as this. The tactics he employs to shame those of whom he disapproves and rally those whose secret feelings are his own are shock tactics, and since he finds it necessary to identify a single cause of all that he dislikes, the tactics are directed in particular against the modern pursuit of worldly happiness and well-being. This is the only reason I can see for his placing on the same level as *Oz* and Dr Martin Cole's film, *Growing Up*, the B.M.A.'s booklet, *Getting Married*, from which he quotes the following advice: "No one's there to tell you you must or must not do this or that, it's up to you. If your sex life pleases you both, it's a happy sex life. . . ." Robinson comments (if that's the word): "By this argument the advantage of marriage is that it prevents anyone from interfering with one's perhaps evil ways. There's no one to tell you—not even God or conscience; for here marriage is the perfect way of reducing sex to any kind of pleasure without reproach. . . ." He also quotes Germaine Greer's "Choose lesbianism in an honourable, clear-eyed fashion, rejecting shame and inferiority feelings as a matter of principle, whether such feelings exist or not . . ." and is shocked not by Miss Greer's principled repressive urge but by the fact that it is "guilt" which is to be repressed, for "the removal of the possibility of guilt is the removal of the possibility of significance. . . ." (I have met one or two people who seemed incapable of feeling guilty about anything and there was certainly something missing from their lives but I wouldn't call it "significance.") Even the poor "Samaritans" get it in the neck for "trying as an essential part of their idea, to relieve people of the necessary (if intolerable) human responsibility for one's own life. . . ."

I should admire Robinson's noble stoicism more if it were not so often, as here, vicarious. The pursuit of happiness is shown repeatedly as an unworthy end, and he is therefore consistent in condemning the "enlightenment" which "controls all three parties, the daily and weekly press, and all the television channels" as "technologico-Benthamite", a term he borrows from Dr Leavis; though Dr Leavis too, "even though he writes often, sometimes movingly, of 'human need', fails to realise that 'need' is bound to demand the kind of satisfaction that can be prescribed. . . ." My understanding of the common language here, incidentally, as in a number of other places differs from Robinson's, and I don't see why "need" has to be like that at all. Something which is unexpected in one's discovery

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of a genuine work of art is that it can satisfy needs of which one had been unaware.

DR MISHAN WRITES as a "radical pragmatist", interested in seeing how far the well-being of the community as a whole can be measured and the calculations used as part of social policy. I don't know whether Robinson would want to write him off as "technologico-Benthamite", but I hope not, as it seems to me that Mishan's kind of utilitarianism (my word, incidentally, not his) offers a way out of the impasse in which Robinson has placed himself. Apart from the fact that they reach a number of similar conclusions and that both have it in for the prevailing "enlightenment", I find nothing incompatible between what Robinson is saying at his best and Mishan's beliefs and way of arguing. Mishan, for example, is only too ready to point out when people's well-being eludes measurement and when this too has to be taken into account in social policy, and there is nothing in his utilitarianism to preclude the view that absolute commandments and moral imperatives may be what people ultimately need and desire, and that it is not "happiness" which will always make them happy.

The advantage of his approach over Robinson's can be seen in his chapter on "Making the Future Safe for Mankind", where he returns to the arguments of *The Costs of Economic Growth* and argues that "growth", as pursued by Mr Wilson and Mr Heath, is not just "materialism run berserk", as Robinson puts it, but something deceptive in what should be obvious economic terms; and this not because of the accompanying evil of inflation on which Robinson dwells (and which would surely not be an evil if it were true that the average standard of living became higher in spite of inflation and because of the "growth" that causes inflation) but because of the absurdly inadequate official notions of what constitutes "standard of living" and the "cost" of any product, and hence the profit to industry and the country as a whole from producing it:

> The explanation resides perhaps in a "misplaced concreteness" which, despite occasional disclaimers in our more civilised moments, tends to associate utility, or value, with *market prices*. But if all that is priced has value, the reverse is certainly not true. For this reason the economist interested in welfare can devise a rule for putting a price on those things that for one reason or another escape the price mechanism; yet a rule which follows in every respect the logic of the Market. . . .

Of Mishan's calculation of what the true cost of industrial expansion would prove to be if assessed realistically, I can only say that, as a layman, I find it very convincing indeed. More importantly,

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it seems to me an effective way of arguing against those who honestly and for the best motives believe that "growth" as currently understood is necessary to our well-being and survival. The argument is pursued, incidentally, in Mishan's reply in *Lloyds Bank Review* for October 1972 to Professor Beckerman's "Why We Need Economic Growth" in the same journal for October 1971. It is the necessity that Mishan denies. We are free, he argues, to live without it.

ONE OF MISHAN'S yard-sticks for measuring the general well-being is one for which he deserves the George Medal, for in applying it he defies what is perhaps the fiercest and most widespread of modern prejudices, the belief that one has no right to assume that the kind of life one prefers is one that others would like or that one speaks for anyone but oneself in this respect. I have never heard anyone say he enjoys what Mishan calls "tourist blight" or the "spillover effects" of growth: "the accumulation of oil and sewage on our coasts, contamination of lakes and rivers, air pollution, traffic congestion and shrieking aircraft. . . ." Yet one is told repeatedly that this, or rather their cause, is what the majority desires (as if the majority had ever been consulted) and that it would be selfish and patronising ("elitist") to assume otherwise, especially when the happiness of those poorer than oneself is at stake. That there is no warrant for this view, that it can be a "gratuitous insult to the working man" and that it is "the rich alone, at present, who are able to get out of any environment that is sinking in the scale of amenity . . ." is argued in a reply to a tract by Mr Anthony Crosland (one of the most passionate and caustic advocates of the view at issue), in which he argues also against the belief now shared by Mr Heath that it is only further industrial growth that will enable us to afford to check pollution.

The same moral prejudice which tells us we have no right to assume that others may want to lead our kind of life is apparent in much of the contemporary "permissiveness" which is the subject of the chapter that gives its title to Mishan's book. With a reasonableness that, given the subject, amounts to a *tour de force*, he argues that the present deliberate ubiquitous sexual stimulation, together with the ugliness and noise that are among the rewards of growth, could have consequences that the majority would almost certainly regard as atrocious, particularly for those who grow up knowing no other kind of world; and, like Robinson, he objects specifically to the current interpretation of the Obscene Publications Act which puts the onus of proof that a publication is likely to "deprave or corrupt" on the prosecution. It is rare, as he points out, for intellectuals and academics who tell us repeatedly that such proof cannot be given in the precise deterministic sense which the law now (they tell us, rightly) requires to argue that literature can do no good. (And he might have quoted, of course, the publishers' foreword to the novel whose defence in the Appeal Court led to the present interpretation of the Act: *Last Exit to Brooklyn* is a "remarkable first novel by a writer with a Zolaesque passion for truth and morality. . . .") "Therefore such a position amounts to the belief that although art and literature can do a great deal of good, they can never do any harm—reassuring perhaps but hardly convincing."

Mr Robinson's proposed reform of the law is that "deprave and corrupt" should be seen as referring not to subsequent behaviour but to the immediate effect of any work on trial, and that witnesses should speak as literary critics and answer where necessary the question "Has it corrupted *you*?" with "Yes. . . . Look how it works *here* and *here*. This is depraved, isn't it?" His account of the present farce of calling "expert witnesses" is one of the many sensible things in his book, but I am unhappy about this solution. To "corrupt" and to be "depraved" are not always the same thing. The one means to produce a powerful but undesirable effect, which is what the two brave witnesses who found *Last Exit to Brooklyn* corrupting were assumed to be saying; the other may refer to what merely repels, an effect which is unpleasant but not necessarily undesirable. Honest witnesses and jurymen who happen to be immune from a book's power to corrupt may, when compelled to read it right through, be disgusted to the point of boredom and hence indifference. The proposed reform would surely be as unworkable as the present law.

I AM NOT VERY HAPPY, either, about Mishan's belief that in a "constitutional democracy at least, law is the ultimate expression of public opinion . . ." and that it is wrong for any government to "lead" public opinion in any way other than by "reasoned argument." The world may have gone even madder than Mishan realises, and the kind of life he prefers may be desired only by a minority of *vieilles barbes* like him and myself; in which case, it would be difficult to object to the present permissive laws on any of the grounds he adduces. In gambling on the chance that he knows what the public believes and desires, he may be being as realistic as is possible in the world as it is; though his realism depends on the assumption that nothing is likely to change in our economy or the consequent

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state of public opinion with any dramatic suddenness in any immediate future. If it were to, we might find that any consensus on any subject would be as difficult to establish as when Lenin took over in Russia or Mussolini in Italy. The issue of pornography, which, as he points out, is at present among the expanding industries, might come to seem unimportant, and one of the other explosive topics he handles, immigration, something that divides us far more. Mishan's chapter on this topic is an admirably dispassionate account of the economic benefits immigration has brought in the last twenty years. His conclusions are that there have been none, even by conventional economic criteria, that the change in our national life is certainly not due to government having followed the wishes of the majority, and that it may be arrogant and self-defeating to try to shame or discipline the unenlightened into treating coloured immigrants as ordinary fellow-citizens. One of the merits of this chapter is that one can accept the force of these arguments while still hoping that public opinion will evolve in such a way as to make racial conflict or inferiority unthinkable and a Race Relations Board unnecessary. It promotes the possibility of common assumptions and a corresponding degree of mutual understanding in an area of debate in which only mutual antagonism has so far seemed possible and in which the immigrant population has been in the unenviable position of a *casus belli* among the divided whites. And it is perhaps because this is his intention that he makes no reference whatever to the merely "donnish" speeches (as Robinson calls them) on immigration of Mr Enoch Powell.

Is Richardson Alive?

The Novel as Drama—By LAURENCE LERNER

WHICH OF OUR ENTHUSIASMS will surprise future generations? Will it be Eliot, perhaps, or Robbe-Grillet, Sartre or Beckett, the writer who touches a 20th-century nerve and is read with enthusiasm by thousands, and whom the 22nd century will hear of with puzzled respect? Who, in short, will turn out to be the Richardson of our time? Richardson's impact on fiction was immediate and profound. Readers waited eagerly for the next instalment of *Clarissa*, and wrote to the author begging him to give it a happy ending; Dr Johnson considered *Clarissa* "the first book in the world for the knowledge it displays of the human heart"; Diderot, in a startlingly modern image, praised him for carrying a torch to the depths of the cave, and teaching us to discern *les motifs subtils et déshonnêtes* hiding under the more respectable motives we profess; and the chorus of praise extends as far as George Eliot, who wrote "it is a solace to hear of any one's reading and enjoying Richardson." And not only *Clarissa*: *Sir Charles Grandison*, which no one now reads, had as many admirers (including George Eliot again), and Jane Austen knew it so well that in talking of a new bonnet she described it as "white satin and lace, and a little white flower perking out of the left ear, like Harriet Byron's feather."

And today? That spontaneous life is now gone, never, alas, to return. Such long books, and so full of morality: how can one see them in paperback on the bookstalls, serialised on BBC-2, devoured by students on the tube? And worst of all, the one reasonably short one, *Pamela* (a mere 900 pages), is the most moralising, the least subtle, in a way the most immoral of the lot; so that there is no real way into Richardson except through his masterpiece *Clarissa*, the longest novel in English (and one of the greatest). So long and so thorough that it is almost impossible to quote from it, but quote I must, to lay a foundation for my discussion, and to give a glimpse of what we are missing. Clarissa having run off with the rake Lovelace, to avoid the repulsive husband her family have found for her, is in an ambiguous position, more or less his prisoner, still fancying him more than she has admitted, but furiously determined to keep the chastity he would like to take away before perhaps, in the end, marrying her. Lovelace is writing to his friend:

> I saw her enter dressed all but her gloves, and those and her fan in her hand.
> Going abroad, madam?
> I am, sir.
> I looked cursed silly, I am sure. You will breakfast first, I hope, madam.
> Yes, she would drink one dish; and then laid her gloves and fan in the window just by.
> I was perfectly disconcerted. I hemmed and was going to speak several times; but knew not in what key. Who's modest now, thought I! Who's insolent now?
> At last, I will begin, thought I.
> She a dish—I a dish.
> Sip, her eyes her own, she; like a haughty and imperious sovereign, conscious of dignity, every look a favour.

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> Sip, like her vassal, I; lips and hands trembling, and not knowing that I sipped or tasted.
> I was—I was—I sipped—(drawing in my breath and the liquor together, though I scalded my mouth with it) I was in hopes, madam—Dorcas came in just then. Dorcas, said she, is a chair gone for? Damned impertinence, thought I, thus to put me out in my speech.

The scene goes on for pages, and presupposes the many, many pages that have gone before; but even these fragments show something of the dramatic genius that mocks while it so beautifully mimes; that steps so completely into the person of that Lovelace we have so often been shown indignantly from the outside. Not Jane Austen nor Stendhal nor James ever captured more accurately the rhythms of irritability and disdain, the comedy of power and politeness, as this semi-educated printer describing an aristocratic world he admitted knowing nothing about.

So what sort of life do Richardson's novels enjoy today? They survive in the syllabus, but only for a few enthusiasts; they are discussed, and even read, by historians of the novel and sociologists of the rise of the novel; and every now and then they capture a critic who offers them half a lifetime of devotion and a long, loving book. Mr Kinkead-Weekes has done just this, and his study represents the best life Richardson can now have: he knows the novels inside out, he has pondered every twist in the plot, every nuance in the style, and has written with sensitivity and insight.[1] His book is a determined attempt to keep Richardson for literature: to analyse the author's attitude to society is all very well in its way, but it is reductivist if not based "on a full understanding of his vision." In trying to show the full complexity of that vision, Mr Kinkead-Weekes is also showing that "values properly exist only as they are embodied in behaviour", with all the qualifications that leads to, and so is reminding us of the value of literature for ethical discussion. Richardson's greatness, then, lies in the rendering of behaviour, in what (though Mr Kinkead-Weekes does not much use the term) we can call his realism. Thus after describing the way a scene demonstrates the theme of clothes, jewels and money as a substitute for love, he continues "but the real achievement is the way that Richardson creates, in the sibilant inflections of Bella's voice, a caressing enjoyment of inflicting pain." Hence the title of his book, and of its main general chapter, "The Novel as Drama," and hence its claim to be centrally concerned with "the exploratory challenges of the dramatic form." Mr Kinkead-Weekes would, I feel, approve my choice of a passage to quote from *Clarissa*, for it is just that exploratory challenge that puts the author into the narrating person of his villain with such marvellous gusto, and leaves us so profoundly teased by the sentence "I looked cursed silly, I am sure", once we pause to ask who, in the whole situation, is making who look silly.

THE PRICE WE PAY FOR the new way of writing," says Mr Kinkead-Weekes, "is of course its length." After reading *Clarissa* one realises that every other novel one has ever read was incomplete: there were always more thoughts, more remarks, more nuances to the situation that we could have been given, that would have made things slightly different. But to read two thousand pages (of which Richardson correctly said not one was irrelevant to the main action) on a single episode, with comparatively few characters, leaves us feeling that, for once, we have been told everything. And what we say of the novelist can be said of the critic too. It is no doubt appropriate to Richardson, and even more especially to Mr Kinkead-Weekes' view of Richardson, that he should receive a long close commentary of 500 pages: the book could not have been shorter if it was to take up the exploratory challenge of the realism, but it leaves one asking who it is for. For

[1] *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist.* By MARK KINKEAD-WEEKES. Methuen, £5.20.

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it is neither an introduction to Richardson, nor is it a contribution to a general theory of the novel: it keeps its eye firmly on the words on the page, and unless you are familiar with each of the novels it's no use reading Mr Kinkead-Weekes' commentary on it. For this tiny audience he has written splendidly, but for no one else.

I WANT IN CONCLUSION to look up from the page to raise a question of literary theory: for I find I have one profound disagreement with Mr Kinkead-Weekes, whose implications are far-reaching. Briefly, I think he is too moral. He sees *Clarissa* as a religious novel, concerned at the deepest level with "the psalmist's other great question, not only what is man, but is God mindful of him?" and he therefore reads it as a continual assertion of a morally ordered view of life, in which we have to learn to appreciate the greatness of Clarissa's character and see through those who misjudge her, even the sympathetic characters who are not saints, Belford and Anna Howe. As for Lovelace, "what we watch is the deliberate self-blinding of an intelligence", so that he turns into "a sort of frenzied automaton", and our final attitude to him is one of revulsion. Now it seems to me that this view of the artistic universe as a moral hierarchy, and of the reader's response as one of judgment, is not compatible with the view that Richardson's greatness is essentially dramatic. In his more general chapters, Mr Kinkead-Weekes admits that "to project oneself imaginatively into radically different points of view is to embark on a road which leads to relativity", but in his commentary he is not always willing to admit just how far down that road Richardson has already travelled. True, Lovelace's obsessively and elaborately planned abduction of Clarissa was (and from the start!) the work of a frenzied automaton; but the cool wit of that automaton ("she a dish—I a dish"), his ability to size up a situation with universal mockery, shows an imaginative reach that the saintly Clarissa could never attain to. I salute Mr Kinkead-Weekes' firm rejection of the reductivist social or psychological readings that ignore the total vision of the novel; and I suggest to him that morality can be as reductivist as sociology.

Of course he is too good a critic not to appreciate Lovelace, and he knows how deeply Richardson identified with his villain; but all the same, he sometimes imposes a moral reading of the novel that denies this insight. I suppose he is as divided on Lovelace as Richardson himself; and perhaps this can be defended as a necessary tension. But on *Sir Charles Grandison* he actually seems to me imperceptive, for he pays virtually no attention to the liveliest character in the book, Charlotte Grandison, the one person who keeps

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refusing to accept the morality so solemnly asserted by all around her, setting up a counter-centre to the book from which most of the real life comes. Charlotte's teasing and perversity is pregnant with an alternative morality that Richardson could never have articulated. George Eliot realised this, but Mr Kinkead-Weekes is blind to her charm.

The issue which all this raises is the possibility of a moral vision in a work of literature. Morality involves a scale of acceptances and rejections, and the author committed to a moral scheme must constantly ask us to reject certain attitudes, and to regard his villains with revulsion. If however we think of the great writer as one who takes as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen, for (as Keats claimed) "what shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet", then we shall see the literary genius as essentially dramatic, unconcerned with the moral activity of rejecting, so that the Lovelace who shocked the virtuous author (in later editions Richardson added footnotes to make sure we realised how wicked he was) delights the chameleon reader. A critic of Richardson must trust the tale, and not be too virtuous.

Jesus or Christ

Some Recent Interpretations—By CHAIM RAPHAEL

FOR SOME YEARS now, Jewish writers have tried to say something fresh about Jesus, drawing specifically on the Jewish background of his life. An early book of this kind, Joseph Klausner's *Jesus of Nazareth*, published (in English) in 1925, set out to show that the basic teachings of Jesus were all paralleled in rabbinical Judaism, but that they had an edge to them that was bound to lead to a split from Judaism, even before the Greek elements were given full play in Christianity. David Flusser (also a professor from Jerusalem) has developed a similar idea from a psychological angle, crediting Jesus with an insight into social issues that was beyond the grasp of the rabbis.

Two new factors are more common in recent books. The first draws on the sectarian background of the Dead Sea Scrolls, mainly to get a clearer concept of apocalyptic ideas in some Jewish circles of the time. This is an important aspect of a valuable new book by Geza Vermes.[1] The second—perhaps partly as a reaction to the establishment of the State of Israel—explores Jesus as a political rebel against the Romans, as a Zealot, a resistance fighter. There is much to be said for this approach, but only if one guards against the danger of transposing an ancient scene into a modern one. A somewhat unorthodox version of this thesis is given play in a new book by a doughty polemicist, Hyam Maccoby.[2]

Jews in modern times—*i.e.* since they felt free to read the New Testament (which is very recently indeed)—have always been ambivalent about Jesus. On the one hand, so much of the Gospels seems familiarly Jewish, including the style of discussion, with its constant reference to verses of the Old Testament. On the other hand, Jews are set up as the villains of the story, not only for their alleged role in the crucifixion, but through their link, then and now, with those odious characters, the Pharisees. No Papal pronouncement will ever clear Jews of *this* odium, though as it happens the dominant role of the Pharisees as projected by the Gospels is shown in a new study by John Bowker, lecturer in Divinity at Cambridge, to be quite unhistorical.[3]

Jews have always suspected this: but it is only one aspect of the Gospels that puzzles them. The crucial dramas of the story seem out of perspective. Did Jesus really think of himself as the Messiah, and if so what did he mean by it? Was he really tried by the Sanhedrin on charges of blasphemy, with Pilate then forced to order execution against his real will? Scholars today ascribe much of this emphasis to the polemical and political aims of the Gospel writers, long after the events, and with a Roman audience to impress.

THE GOSPEL STORIES are so easy to read, projecting a broad story which is now deeply embedded in Western culture, that to suggest they are confused, artificial, and tendentious is to invite coals of fire. This indeed is what happened

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[1] *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels.* By GEZA VERMES. Collins, £3.15.

[2] *Revolution in Judaea: Jesus and the Jewish Resistance.* By HYAM MACCOBY. Orbach & Chambers, £2.70.

[3] *Jesus and the Pharisees.* By JOHN BOWKER. Cambridge £4.20. University Press,

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a couple of years ago to Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper in the columns of *The Spectator* over a review he wrote there (23 January 1971) of a book by C. H. Dodd called *The Founder of Christianity*. For months, outraged letter-writers stormed the Editor with accusations that Trevor-Roper had dismissed the Gospels as "palpable rubbish." He had, in fact, said something much more carefully defined; but there was never the slightest chance that those who had been shocked would understand how anyone could draw a line between the "truth" of Christianity for those who believe in it, and the reliability of the Gospels as historical source-material. To most people it does, indeed, seem self-evident that if one is a Christian one "believes" in the Gospels. The Jesus who appears there is the Jesus of the faith.

For New Testament scholars this is both true and untrue, and it is a dilemma they have lived with for a long time. The ordinary reader is impatient with finicky judgments of this kind. He has no difficulty in being carried away completely, wherever he opens the New Testament, by the beauty and mystery of Jesus' life and death. Gaps and contradictions in the story are irrelevant. Shining through everything there is a recognisable central figure, a man whose words touch the heart, the friend of the friendless, the teacher, the victim. There is such authority in the stories of his simple humanity—gentle Jesus, meek and mild—that the miraculous side of the Gospels becomes equally acceptable; and the birth, death and resurrection of this marvellous man become events around which the world itself turns. W. H. Auden, indeed, put it precisely this way, in one of his last poems (May 1973):

> *Spring with its thrusting leaves and jargling birds is here again*
> *to remind me again of the first real Event, the first genuine Accident, of that Once when, once a tiny corner of the Cosmos had turned just indulgent enough*
> *to give it a sporting chance. . . .*

The scholars, being mostly Christian, welcome this direct reaction to the personality of Jesus, even though they have to acknowledge that in a sense the popular picture is upside-down. Historically, Christianity did not start with Jesus' life but with his death—or more accurately still, with the story of his resurrection. If Jesus' immediate followers venerated him as a healer and teacher, the world at large began to worship him on the basis of a miracle. The story of his resurrection, coupled with the full expectation of his Second Coming, had immense appeal in the Greek world of the Mediterranean, and indeed developed in harmony with the ideas, myths, and mysteries of that world. The Evangelists, preaching this mystery, had to preface it with an

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account of the human being to whom it all happened, tailoring such folk-memories as were available to fit the unearthly mystery with which it was to end. But if the Gospel stories are polemical and theological documents rather than history, can the original Jesus be extracted from them?

Some scholars have thought not. The only thing Christians can be sure of, they argue (usually in German), is the figure as created by Christianity and defined in the Creed: *"the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds . . . incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary"*, etc. Jesus as a Jew from Galilee is beyond reach: it is *Christ* who must be pursued. The Gospels help, not through narrative but through the deep Christological meaning one can find in the terms used—"Messiah" itself, "Lord", "Son of Man."

Other scholars are less extreme, holding that a human Jesus can be recovered from the Gospels, especially if one does not try to be too precise about where the human figure ends and the mystery begins. This was, in fact, the approach of *The Founder of Christianity*, the book which got Trevor-Roper into such trouble. The author, Professor Dodd—a very eminent scholar, who died recently—was fully aware of the unreliability of the Gospels as documentary history in the ordinary sense. Yet he felt that they allowed him to tell the life-story of the Founder quite convincingly, for two main reasons. First, the Evangelists, remote from the events as they were, were drawing on what might be described as social memory: "the church *remembers* that on a certain night its Founder said and did certain definite things, briefly reported." Second, details "remembered" this way, but hard to understand, often "came true" in a later context. A good example would be the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Dodd is fully prepared to admit that "none of the attempts to make the story intelligible or credible . . . carry conviction": but he asks one to note that it is presented "as a mystery." It was a mystery that was to become clear later when John related this bread to the bread which Jesus gave to his disciples at the Last Supper, with the words: "This is my body." By moving backwards and forwards, Dodd implies, one unites both Jesus and Christ.

THERE IS, HOWEVER, a less mysterious way to deal with the Gospels, and one sees it at work in *Jesus the Jew*. Dr Vermes, who is Reader in Jewish Studies at Oxford, says modestly that his book "is not an attempt to reconstruct the authentic portrait of Jesus", but simply "to find out how the writers of the Gospels, echoing primitive tradition, wished him to be known." To this reader at least, this is slightly misleading. A portrait—or at least an impression—of Jesus does in fact emerge, built up out of Gospel material, but tested always by material contemporary to Jesus from other sources. This picture of Jesus seems not so much how the Evangelists "wished him to be known", but rather how they *let* him be known, at least to an historian like Dr Vermes. There has to be a good deal of sifting and selection.

The *idée maîtresse* of Dr Vermes' presentation is Jesus' link with Galilee, an area that maintained a strong tradition of independence, suspicious of both the Jewish and the Roman authorities in Jerusalem. Basically,

> "once the Gospel report concerning his person and work is analyzed, the secondary traits removed, and the essential features inserted into the context of contemporary political and religious history, Jesus of Nazareth takes on the eminently credible personality of a Galilean Hasid [pious teacher]. . . ."

As exorcist and healer, he was similar to others. As a preacher, it is true that he preferred audiences of the poor and uneducated, and "spoke with authority" rather than by deriving everything from rabbinical ordinance. But if he was more relaxed about the Law than the Pharisees, "there is no evidence of an active and organized participation on the part of the Pharisees in the planning and achievement of his downfall. . . ."

To what extent did Jesus regard himself as having a superhuman role? Certainly he thought of himself as a "prophet", but this was a term that had no precise definition. It could cover both a teacher with insight, and a precursor of the Messiah. The title "Lord", by which he was addressed, had no divine significance. The persistent use of the phrase "Son of Man", thought by some to lead back to "the oldest Christological traditions", is shown by Vermes to have had no relation in Jesus' time "to an eschatological or Messianic office-holder." As for being the Messiah, Vermes remarks:

> "Strange though it may seem, Jesus' own teaching on the subject of the Messiah, even if the obviously inauthentic passages are included, amounts to very little."

After a long analysis of all the various meanings attached to the concept of the Messiah at that time, we are reminded that "Jesus never asserted directly or spontaneously that he was the Messiah."

Was he tried by the Sanhedrin for blasphemy? The evidence is against it. Was he then a political rebel? The idea of Jesus as a Zealot "fails to convince." But Galilee is where rebels came from. "Zealot or not, Jesus was certainly charged, prosecuted and sentenced as one", and probably because he was a Galilean.

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JESUS AS POLITICAL REBEL is taken much further in the book by Hyam Maccoby. Going beyond the now familiar presentation of Jesus as a resistance leader, Maccoby believes that Jesus was actually annointed King of the Jews, and that this is the way to read the Transfiguration. Every detail there, (and in his subsequent arrival in Jerusalem, "his capital") can be given a coronation significance. In his mode of entry to the city, for example, he was deliberately fufilling Zechariah's prophecy: *"Behold thy King cometh unto thee . . . riding upon an ass."* But Vermes, discussing this idea, says laconically that the more likely explanation for riding on a donkey is that "he found this mode of transport more suitable and convenient than walking. . . ."

This cool approach must not be mistaken for indifference. It is clear from his Preface that Dr Vermes has attempted in this book to clarify the *facts* about the setting of Jesus in order to be free to proceed with his next book, which is to be on "the genuine teaching of the Master from Galilee." One is reminded of a pregnant remark in the book on Jesus by David Flusser:

> "From ancient Jewish writings we could easily construct a whole gospel without using a single word which originated with Jesus. This could only be done, however, because we do in fact possess the Gospels."

Ming Mayhem

On Chin-pi'ng-mei — *By* TAO TAO SANDERS

WHEN MICHELANGELO completed the fresco of the Last Judgment for the Sistine Chapel objections were raised against the depiction of nudity in a place of worship. Finally another painter, a pupil of Michelangelo's called Daniele da Volterra, was employed to veil the nudity discreetly by means of drapery, and Daniele earned for himself the name of "breeches-maker." An operation in reverse has been performed on Clement Egerton's translation of the Chinese novel *The Golden Lotus* which was first brought out in 1939 with all the erotic passages done into Latin; a new edition has appeared with the Latin passages turned into English.[1] One can at least see the novel now in its entirety and be in a position to know that these passages are not very long or very many, and that there is a great deal more to the novel than the pornography. However, the eroticism has overshadowed the rest of the book, so that it was always thought of as a "bad" book in China, though it was very popular and widely read, even when available only in a censored form.

The book was written in the late 16th or early 17th century, in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), and though the time is set at the end of the Sung dynasty (960–1279) it undoubtedly portrays contemporary society. The central figure is Hsi-men Ch'ing, a merchant of a provincial town not far from the capital, who begins life as a shopkeeper, and during the progress of the novel considerably increases the size of his fortune and the number of his wives through massive bribery and corruption and even murder, so that at the time of his death he is a very rich man and much feared in the town. The title of the novel in Chinese, *Chin-p'ing-mei*, refers to the names of three of Hsi-men Ch'ing's women. The first syllable *chin* ("golden") is Golden Lotus, a diabolical character who murdered her first husband before marrying Hsi-men. She monopolises her husband not only to have him in her power, but also because of her sexual needs. She brings about the death of her most serious rival, the Lady of the Vase (the *p'ing*, "vase", of the title), no virtuous lady herself for she too had connived at her first husband's death. Golden Lotus succeeds in twisting her husband round her little finger, but overreaches herself, and Hsi-men dies from an overdose of aphrodisiac and sex. With her husband's death Golden Lotus has lost her only protector; she is sold to a procuress, who in turn sells her to the brother of her first husband who kills her in revenge.

The last syllable *mei* in the title refers to Plum Blossom, maid to Golden Lotus, and mistress though never wife to Hsi-men. It is after the death of these two that she becomes an important character, and rises to be the wife of a powerful military figure in the town. But the life has gone out of the novel after the death of Hsi-men and Golden Lotus. The last twenty odd chapters describe the break-up of the household; a rather long coda written as if to satisfy the reader's curiosity about what happened to the other characters, and to show how retribution visits the guilty.

The numerous encounters between Hsi-men Ch'ing and his wives and mistresses afford many

[1] *The Golden Lotus.* Translated by CLEMENT EGERTON. Routledge, 4 vols., £10·50 the set.

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chances of describing the sexual act. It was the frankness of these descriptions that alarmed Chinese readers and caused the book to be put on the proscribed list along with other erotic works. The mere possession of many wives and mistresses in a polygamous society did not constitute gross immorality—over-indulgence, perhaps—especially as Hsi-men's women are by and large experienced and willing; it is to be noted that no woman of virtue gets into his clutches.

Unexpurgated texts of this novel are rare, found only in a few old editions. As a collector's item the complete novel combined both rarity value and a more or less acknowledged interest in collecting pornographic books, especially albums of erotic paintings. (The detailed descriptions in *The Golden Lotus* gave rise to such paintings.) The collecting of such books used to be reasonably commonplace; there was even a vague superstition in some places that these collections protected the household from fire, which was much feared by the Chinese who lived in wooden houses.

IT WOULD NOT be doing the book justice to write it off as another display of sexual behaviour, where the plot existed merely to hang descriptions on, as might be said of another pornographic Chinese novel known to the West as *The Prayer Mat of Flesh*, though *The Golden Lotus* has been treated as such. The descriptions of the sexual act are not altogether gratuitous pornography; it is through them that the relationship between Hsi-men Ch'ing and Golden Lotus is brought out. Hsi-men begins as the wooer and the master, and in these encounters the descriptions tend to be given in the elaborate code of metaphoric terms which was the convention of polite literature. Gradually Golden Lotus emerges as the stronger character, holding him at the end of a leash, abusing and ruining the other women whom he loves. The descriptions of their sexual encounters correspondingly grow more direct and disgusting until the last scene of his death where nothing is hidden.

Not only is Hsi-men sedulous in love affairs, he is also seeking to rise above the merchant class he belongs to by securing, however deviously, an official position which will give him more power. To this end he is ruthless and cunning, handing out large bribes to other officials, taking advantage of the weaknesses of friend and foe, and not stopping at murder. The picture of Hsi-men is not intended to be a sympathetic one, but if the author meant to portray a thoroughly bad man, he has failed, because Hsi-men never comes alive as a real person in these activities, and consequently we never really believe in them. We see him as a real human being only in relation to his

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wives and women where in spite of his immorality he is capable of tenderness and affection to the women he loves, and even dies the victim of a more ruthless and depraved personality than himself. Although his death can be seen as retribution, there is a basic ambiguity about the character that gains him our sympathy in spite of everything we know about him. What comes over unequivocally in the book is the rottenness of the society that produced these people and their victims; it is heartless, grabbing and utterly corrupt.

All this is played out against the background of detailed descriptions of the daily life of Hsi-men's household. The reader is given a very clear idea of the domestic arrangements both by day and night, the position of each member of the house, and the business appropriate to each season. Such a close account of family life at times dilutes the excitement of the plot and often inclines the reader to put the book down. The picture it gives of the times is not a comprehensive one; the world depicted is that of the middle and lower middle classes: merchants, shopkeepers, pawnbrokers, doctors, charlatan nuns, brothel-keepers, singing girls and a smattering of corrupt officials and palace eunuchs. In the rise of Hsi-men Ch'ing is also shown the behaviour of the *nouveaux riches* who buy themselves into political power. The novel provides plenty of socio-anthropological interest concerning this period and this stratum of society, yet like all novels intended for entertainment, there is a large element of wishful thinking: women succumb to Hsi-men in droves; his wealth materialises with extraordinary ease, and it is hard to believe that a merchant of a provincial town could really summon the resources to pay such large bribes.

WHEN THE BOOK made its appearance, there is evidence that it was greeted with delight by men of letters, not for its pornographic content but for the whole shape of the novel. Historically *The Golden Lotus* is a very important step in the development of Chinese vernacular fiction; it is one of the first full-length novels with a single plot, and one that took contemporary society as its subject. In structure it has greater unity than the other major novels produced in the Ming dynasty, such as the *Journey to the West* (abridged and translated by Arthur Waley as *Monkey*), which is a picaresque novel drawing on Buddhist and Taoist folklore, or the *Water Margin* (translated by Pearl Buck as *All Men are Brothers*), which is a conglomeration of adventures of famous bandit heroes. These novels are still near in evolution to the oral art of the popular story-tellers, who related episode after

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episode, day after day, as public entertainment; they were anonymous craftsmen who re-shaped traditional material, often re-telling stories from the past that their audiences already knew. *The Golden Lotus* is the work of a single creator who conceived the novel from beginning to end, even though he also drew upon the same techniques and obtained his plot and incidentals from the stock of material common to story-tellers. The novel actually takes its origin from an episode that also appears in the *Water Margin*, in which Wu Sung avenges the murder of his brother by killing his sister-in-law Golden Lotus and her lover. From this episode has grown the whole life of *The Golden Lotus*.

The sources of other parts of the novel, especially the sub-plots, can be found in a cross-section of the popular literature of the time: songs, dramatic lyrics, and the popular short stories. *The Golden Lotus* retains the variety typical of popular entertainment, being in turn amorous tale, comic burlesque, and social satire. It has also kept the characteristic form of popular fiction in its mixture of prose and verse, a style which dates back a long way. Prose came to dominate in the story-telling while the verse was given the subordinate though still important position of summarising a point or describing an event or person or feelings. Earlier editions of the novel contain many such poems, but some have been omitted from the later editions, and Egerton has reduced them further in his translation. The originality of *The Golden Lotus* lies in the conception of a plot and the realism of its characters in their social setting.

The language in which the novel is written is the vernacular of the time, which is quite different from the Classical or formalised archaic style used for all serious writing. Being written down, it was therefore meant for the literate, more leisured class of people, those in the strata of society actually depicted and those above them, who were of course all acquainted with the popular oral entertainment from which the novel arose. The style is racy and colloquial, full of colourful quips and puns that characterise the homely speech of unselfconscious people, and probably reflects quite faithfully the language that was really spoken at that time. In the earliest editions of the book there are traces of the local dialect of Shantung, a province in north China, from which the author probably came, but in the later editions which were printed in the south these dialect words have disappeared. The author is anonymous, and it is possible that he preferred to hide his name not only because of the pornographic content of the book, but also because in general the authors of fictional works were unnamed. The story that attributes the book

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to a famous statesman of the Ming who used the book impregnated with poison as a weapon to kill an enemy is probably no more than legend.

EGERTON'S TRANSLATION was done originally with the help of the Chinese writer Lau Shaw (the author of *The Rickshaw Boy*) somewhat disguised under his real name of C. C. Shu. The translation is therefore accurate on all major points of meaning. The style of English is rather curious, and there are some disconcerting renderings into English, especially of terms of address used by the characters. Such terms pose a considerable problem to the translator, and he has to cast around to find some near-equivalent in English that sounds natural. For example, Hsi-men is often addressed by his family and household as *tieh* which is an affectionate term for "master"; it can also mean "father" in a diminutive form like "dad". Egerton has chosen to use "father" invariably, which despite the virtue of consistency, sounds very odd. The colloquial and often coarse wit of the characters, especially the old match-makers and Golden Lotus herself, is almost completely lost, and the rich variation in manner of speech between individual characters has been submerged. Altogether the English style is invariably blander and more genteel than the original.

Egerton chose to translate the novel from its later editions after the abridgement and editing suffered by many of the long novels of the Ming dynasty to suit commercial needs. In the first chapter the divergence is particularly noticeable; the earlier editions of the novel begin the story in a much more exciting manner, gripping the reader immediately with the story of Golden Lotus and her attempted seduction of her brother-in-law Wu Sung, and Hsi-men Ch'ing is introduced only later. The publishers of the later editions inserted a long, boring account of Hsi-men and his hangers-on before this episode, perhaps to satisfy the expectations of a readership already slightly acquainted with the plot of the novel, and it considerably diminishes the impact of the story.

Otherwise a complete translation has been achieved, with all its imperfections, of a very lengthy novel written not only in difficult colloquial Chinese but in the archaic colloquial of a bygone age. Though the reasons that tempt English speakers to read the book may not be the best, at least they will glimpse other aspects of a novel which represents a rich tradition in Chinese literature.

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Letter from Santiago

Chile's Coup & After

By Robert Moss

NOT LONG AFTER Allende's death, the police searched the home of his former chief of detectives, Eduardo "Coco" Paredes, who had been killed during the fighting. Among his papers, they found a neat inventory of the contents of 13 crates addressed to the late president that had been flown in from Havana on a Cuban plane. The arrival of those crates, back in March 1972, had excited widespread speculation about possible arms smuggling and much outraged muttering about the "comrade president's" immunity from customs. Needled by his critics in the press, Allende finally disclosed that the crates contained mango-flavoured ice-cream—a tribute from the heroic socialist women of Cuba. And there the matter was allowed to rest until "Coco" Paredes's inventory turned up. It showed that, as the reader may have already guessed, the crates had been crammed full with Czech automatic weapons, pistols, grenades and ammunition, which all went into the private arsenals that Allende maintained in his palace, his fortress-like home in the Avenida Tomas Moro, and his weekender at El Cañaveral up in the Andean foothills, where his guards gave instruction in guerrilla tactics and mass-produced home-made explosives.

The truth about the "mango ice-cream" is one detail among the rest that suggest that Allende was no more a man of peace and non-violence than his friend Fidel Castro. Now he is dead and the generals give orders, it is often argued that such details, even if true, are irrelevant. This argument rests on nothing more solid than the claim that, whatever wicked things Allende and his friends were doing, they were not as bad as the "pitiless repression" that followed his overthrow. In the hands of Allende's apologists, this quantitative comparison of the two régimes becomes a simple way of evading the charge that the Marxist government, though democratically elected, had made itself undemocratic. Allende interfered with the press, certainly, but after all—the argument runs—he didn't close down all the papers he didn't like, as the junta has already done.[1] He flouted the wishes of the opposition majority in Congress, certainly, but he didn't close down the opposition parties. His supporters may have set up guerrilla bases and stored up arms for an

[1] His justifiers often add that papers like *El Mercurio*, being voices of the "reactionary middle-class," were ripe for the rubbish-heap anyway. The methods of a pro-Marxist paper like *Clarin* (in which Allende had shares)—conservative leaders were sometimes depicted as naked whores with swastikas around their necks—rarely come under the same kind of critical analysis.

IT IS *a curious foible of contemporary journalism —the ideologised reporters are content to know only their own special political contacts, their "pals", and can't bear to gather all the facts from all possible sources. When, for example, Mr Richard Gott—Penguin's editor of their "Latin American Library" of paperbacks and* The Guardian*'s regular correspondent—arrived in Santiago a few days after the September coup, he confessed that there was "nobody left" he knew from whom he could gather a scrap of information. Nobody at all? In other times this would have been an embarrassing, and damaging, confession for foreign correspondents who usually knew how to talk to Hitler as well as to Ossietsky, to Mussolini as well as Matteotti, who cultivated contacts in all walks of life in order to collect information for a reasonably accurate, comprehensive, and objective story of onrushing events.*

ROBERT MOSS *continues the reconstruction of the recent tragedy in Chile which we began with David Holden's article on "Allende & the Myth Makers" in the January* ENCOUNTER. *Moss contributed an earlier "Letter" on Allende's Chile to the August 1972* ENCOUNTER; *his book on "Allende's Marxist Experiment" was published last year by David & Charles. He is now working on a biography of General Giap and on a study of "The Age of the Terrorist" to follow his "Urban Guerrillas" (Temple Smith, 1972). Mr Moss is a special correspondent of "The Economist" (London).*

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eventual—and violent—"revolution within the revolution," but wasn't that all rather childish and forlorn compared with the smooth efficiency with which the big battalions swung into action when the signal was given on last September 11th?

In debating the rights and wrongs of what has happened in Chile, the important question is not whether the "lesser evil" is a Marxist government on the way to setting up a dictatorship or a military junta that has already done so. It is whether Chile was still a real or viable democracy on the eve of the coup. If, as seems clear to me, it had ceased to be a viable democracy—through the breakdown of consensus politics, the routine violence of both political extremes, the government's systematic violation of the law and, above all, an economic crisis of Weimar proportions—who was primarily responsible?

SUPPOSE THAT a leader of the Labour left became prime minister of Britain and started off by releasing members of the Angry Brigade and the IRA who are currently in jail and formed a private bodyguard out of them to defend No 10 Downing Street. Suppose that he then embarked on a programme of confiscation of private property that affected not just a handful of property speculators, but every small farmer and industrialist in the country and was sped along by the activities of armed squatters seizing houses and farms at gunpoint. Suppose that inflation at an annual rate of three hundred and fifty (350)% was then used as a means of wiping out the savings and the salaries of the middle class, and that (finally) the government's supporters, having turned Manchester and Birmingham into armed camps with the aid of Palestinian terrorists and KGB instructors, incited mutiny within the armed forces. Few people, on either the right or the left, would argue that Britain had remained a viable democracy.

The obvious *riposte* is that the scenario is inconceivable in Britain (which, one prays, it is) and that the substitution is therefore untenable. The point is that if a government in Britain acted in the same way as Allende's did, few people would describe it as democratic, and even fewer if—as would be impossible under the British parliamentary system—it ignored parliament even in the face of a majority ruling that it had "systematically violated the constitution."[2] Those in favour of such a government would have to define their terms rather more carefully than those who persist in calling the Allende régime a "democratic" or even a "people's" government. Many of the liberals who mourn Allende as a progressive reformer would probably man the barricades against a leader who did the same things in Britain. But then Chile, like Czechoslovakia, is a far-away country about which we know precious little and one can always appeal to the mistaken belief that it is just another tin-pot Latin American area where the rich trample on the poor and where an honest man must take the side of the revolutionaries.

MY PURPOSE HERE is not to justify what has happened since the coup—which must raise serious doubts about the future of democracy in Chile, even if the wilder rumour-mongering is discounted—but to show why in some sense the coup became inevitable.

The Chilean coup bore some resemblance to the military takeover in Indonesia in 1965. In both cases, the armed forces had been ready to take orders from a radical left-wing government until it rounded upon them. The Indonesian Communists, who had found a pliant tool in President Sukarno, narrowly failed to eliminate their potential opponents in the high command on the night of 30 September 1965, when six key generals were murdered. There is now evidence to suggest that the leaders of the far left in Chile were planning to deal with suspect generals in a similar way, and that the September coup may have pre-empted an *autogolpe*—a self-made coup.

THREE THINGS SHOULD be made clear at once. First, the coup was made in Chile. If anyone was "meddling" in Santiago politics, it was the Communist side. The 1,400-odd Russians in Chile were not exclusively concerned with importing tractors. The Cubans did not confine themselves to supplying guns and instructors to the Guerrilla Left. They may have played a more critical role than was previously suspected in the counsels of the Allende government. Allende's Cuban son-in-law, Luis Fernández de Oña, who had formerly been the desk-officer behind Che Guevara's Bolivian expedition, took over his wife's office inside the presidential palace, where he was presumably well-placed to examine important cables and correspondence travelling in and out.

Second, the coup did not happen in a political vacuum. In a country as politically-minded as Chile, it would not have been possible without the backing of the major opposition parties, whose leaders now, ironically, find themselves in a state of unemployment. The Christian Democrats, who faced the 1970 election with a programme very similar to Allende's, moved over to qualified support for the military takeover—which may have shown that their death-wish was not as highly developed as Allende had hoped. Allende's most lasting achievement, clearly, was

[2] *El Mercurio*, 23 August 1973.

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to destroy public confidence in a constitutional system that had served Chile better and longer than similar versions have served most West European countries.

Third, the generals might never have moved if they had not had the gage flung at them, first by the Guerrilla Left, and then by Allende himself. The story of how the different factions in the high command finally coalesced to destroy Allende is not generally known, and is therefore worth looking into in some detail.

The Making of "Operation Seaweed"

NOW THAT THE MILITARY have been sucked into Chilean politics, it may not be all that easy to get them out. But that is also part of Allende's legacy. He took the calculated decision to co-opt the generals into his government. It was a way of keeping them out of trouble and of damping down the opposition—since senators would be slower to speak out (and union leaders more reluctant to strike) against the men in the peaked caps. In the end, of course, Allende only succeeded in giving the generals a sense of their own power—and an appetite for more—without securing their loyalty.

He was fortunate, after the murder of General Schneider in October 1970, to find a powerful ally in the new commander-in-chief, General Carlos Prats Gonzalez. Prats was hardly a man of the Left, though he shared with many of his fellow army-officers a profound distrust of the traditional Right. But he developed a close personal friendship both with Allende and with two of the key men in the Chilean Communist Party, Senator Volodia Teitelboim and Luis Figueroa, the trade union leader. His commitment to the régime deepened as his personal ambition grew; there may well be substance in the rumours that the Communists promised to back him in the presidential elections in 1976.

With Prats' support, Allende managed to persuade the armed forces to help him out of his first major crisis, brought on by the wave of opposition strikes in October 1972. Thus Allende was able to form the first of a series of three joint cabinets that presented the world with the novel spectacle of professional soldiers taking their seats beside Communist and Socialist left-wingers. The first time round, the formula worked exactly as the Communists had said it would. Astonished, and partly reassured, by the new coalition government, the strikers returned to work, and Allende's most strident critics fell temporarily silent.

But Prats became an increasingly lonely man. Not all of his senior colleagues relished their role as the underwriters for a government responsible for the worst economic crisis in Chile's modern history, and most of them were angered by Allende's refusal to take action against the paramilitary groups that were organising on the Far Left. Prats showed disturbing signs of personal instability: he quarrelled violently with opposition senators and then, on 27 June, there was his extraordinary skirmish with a middle-class matron called Alejandrina Cox. Mrs Cox noticed him in a passing car, and stuck her tongue out at him. Prats, in fury, ordered his driver to give chase, pursued her for a dozen blocks, fired two bullets at her car to make her stop and then rushed to her window, put his revolver to her head, and addressed her in the following terms: "Apologise, you shit, or I'll kill you (*Pide perdón mierda, o te mato*)." The government afterwards tried to make out, clumsily, that this was all part of some "assassination attempt."

Prats offered his resignation, which was refused. Providentially for him (or perhaps not so providentially, since it seems that government *agents provocateurs* may have been involved[3]) the comic-opera exploits of Colonel Roberto Souper, who attacked the presidential palace with a few tanks two days later, gave him the chance to present himself as the national saviour. But he had lost all credibility with his colleagues. Prats realised that his career was over on 22 August, when Congress ruled that the government had been acting unconstitutionally that day. The women of Santiago, who appear to have played a crucial role at every major turning-point in Chile over the past three years, demonstrated outside his home. The riot police who came to disperse them with tear-gas apparently failed to realise that most of the 300 women present were officers' wives, and that four of them were the wives of serving generals! (There are few countries in the world where you can fire tear-gas into the face of a general's wife and get away with it.) General Prats resigned the following day. He, more than any man, had been the main prop of the Allende government since the October strikes. With the appointment of General Augusto Pinochet as his successor, the way was open for direct military intervention.[4]

BUT THE NAVY, not the Army, was the driving

[3] See my account in *Chile's Marxist Experiment* (David & Charles, 1973).

[4] The armed forces had been made more aware of the dimensions of Chile's economic crises by the confidential monthly reports prepared by a group of some 30 young economists (some were from the Christian Democrat and National Parties, but most were independents) who had been meeting since January. Their work established the framework for the junta's economic programme.

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force behind the coup. Its officers, drawn from the middle class and proud of their long relationship with the Royal Navy—visible by their "English" uniforms and their fondness for pink gin—were always regarded as the most conservative section of the armed forces. Allende's attempts to woo the military with decorations, wage increases, and bland flattery made little impression on them. Although Admiral Raúl Montero, the Navy's commander, was a cautious constitutionalist, he was unpopular with many of his subordinates, who felt that it was his duty to take a firmer stand with Allende—especially after the discovery of left-wing plans for a mutiny.

Early in July, some young naval officers at Talcahuano detected the first signs of what was afoot. Although the Navy is a professional force, left-wing elements had managed to set up "political cells" among young petty officers and ratings. Plans had been drawn up to seize control of the cruiser *Latorre* and the destroyer *Blanco Encalada* and then use them to bombard naval shore installations at Valparaiso. The mutiny was to take place at night; the officers of the watch were to be eliminated, and lists were drawn up of other officers who were to be attacked in their homes. If the mutiny was successful, the ring-leaders were going to claim that they had headed off a Right-wing coup and appeal to Allende to close down Congress and seize total power.

On 7 August, after more than 400 sailors had been arrested and interrogated, the Navy demanded that the parliamentary immunity of two leaders of Allende's coalition—Carlos Altamirano of the Socialist Party and Oscar Garretón of the Movement of United Popular Action (*Mapu*)—should be lifted so that they could be put on trial for their part in the conspiracy. The Navy also called for the arrest of Miguel Enriquez, the chieftain of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (*Mir*). It is now established that all three had met with the ring-leaders of the mutiny. Whether Allende himself was also involved is less clear.

I talked shortly after the coup with one officer from the cruiser *Prat* who claimed that the key organiser on board his ship, a petty officer called Maldonado, had told him that he had taken part in a secret meeting with Allende in the high-rise apartments known as the *Torres de Tajamar* in Santiago. That may well be the kind of thing that a frightened man says under pressure to please his interrogators; but whether or not Allende was personally involved in the plot, it is clear that his government was.

It was with this knowledge that a group of Valparaiso navy planners put the final touches to a secret plan for military intervention. Its code-name was *"Plan Cochayuya,"* derived from the name of a kind of seaweed found along the Chilean coast. The series of incidents that finally brought it into effect will appeal to those who favour the "Cleopatra's nose" conception of history. In fact, what appeared on the surface to be a petty squabble over promotion—over whether or not Admiral Montero would resign to make way for Merino as his successor—merely served to ignite the powder-barrel that Allende had been perching on uncomfortably for many months. While the admirals quarrelled with the president, truck-drivers crippled the country's land communications, Right-wing saboteurs from *Patria y Libertad* blew up railway-lines, and the extreme Left, through its workers' committees and para-military brigades, worked feverishly to gain the upper hand in the confrontation that now seemed inevitable.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, Allende tried to gain time. He tried to allay the increasing militancy of the Christian Democrats by airy promises of changing his policy, of taking them into the cabinet, and even of facing the country with a referendum. He tried to placate the armed forces by allowing them to conduct arms searches in the heartlands of the Guerrilla Left—the Santiago *poblaciones* and the rural bases in the south—while at the same time trying to elbow out conservative officers like the Air Force commander, General Cesar Ruiz, who lost his job in mid-August. He even tried to use the old formula of a joint Military-Marxist cabinet that had bought him time back in 1972. He formed a new cabinet with the service commanders on 9 August, and when that fell apart after Prats' resignation, he managed to cobble together yet another one.

But the tightrope that Allende was trying to walk was being cut away at both ends. As Allende's friend Régis Debray later acknowledged, the Left and the Right were engaged in a race against time. If the junta is to be believed, the Socialist Left and the *Mir* were now preparing their *"Z plan"*—a plan for the assassination of senior officers and civilian opposition leaders that was to have been executed on 18 September. It seems that they timed it a week too late.

ON WEDNESDAY, 29 August, Admiral Merino and Admiral Sergio Huidobro, the chief of the Chilean marines, went up to Santiago to see their commander. They told Admiral Montero that he had lost the confidence of the Navy: he should resign, and the armed forces should withdraw from the cabinet. Montero insisted on consulting the president. So the three admirals drove around to the Avenida Tomás Moro shortly after midnight, where they found Allende "slightly drunk."

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According to one account,[5] he raged at Merino: "I know what you are doing. Well, go ahead! What you discovered at Valparaiso is only one tenth of what the Communists and the *miristas* are doing." And later, shaking his fist, "I have declared war on the Navy." He had thrown down the gauntlet. He is even said to have boasted that his house in Tomás Moro was an "impregnable fortress." To which Huidobro replied: "You should leave matters of security to the experts." It was as if Allende had strayed into that state of *ate* described by the Greek tragedians, in which it becomes impossible to decipher reality from illusion.

The following Friday, back in Valparaiso, 500 naval officers waited in a conference room for an hour-and-a-half while the admirals talked in the nearby town of Salinas. Admiral Montero found that even his oldest friends were now convinced he should resign. Overcome by emotion, he agreed; and his decision was duly reported to the captains and commanders. But when he returned to Santiago, Allende insisted that he should stay on "a few weeks longer." The following morning, the admirals were summoned to Santiago for a surprise meeting in the Defence Ministry. They expected to be told that Montero's resignation was confirmed. Instead, they were asked by Orlando Letelier, the Defence Minister, to stand up one by one and state their reasons for wanting him to go. Allende had calculated that their reluctance to embarrass a fellow-officer in public would make them hold their tongues. He was wrong. Starting with Merino, the admirals stood up in turn and attacked Montero for failing to secure the arrest of those responsible for the Valparaiso plot and for failing to press for military withdrawal from a cabinet that was "destroying the country."

AFTER THIS SHOW OF ADAMANCY, Allende adopted a different tack. He received Merino and Huidobro privately in his palace on Monday, 3 September, and asked them to give him "five or seven days more" to sort out his problems. At the end of that interval, he promised, he would appoint Merino as the new Navy commander and name an entirely civilian cabinet. Merino went back to the squadron at Valparaiso happy enough with this arrangement. But he found that his fellow-officers were not willing to trust Allende's word. It was agreed that if Allende still refused to take immediate action the following Friday (the date set for Merino's next appointment with the president) the signal would be given to launch "Operation Seaweed." The chief of the joint chiefs of staff, Admiral Patricio Carvajal, had been working for some months to get closer collaboration between the three services and the *Carabineros*, but it was still unclear whether the Navy would have to go it alone.

Merino duly kept his appointment on Friday the 7th, and found that Allende was still unready to sack Montero. He did not argue this time. He went back to Valparaiso and gave the signal to launch *Plan Cochayuya*. The original date for the coup was Monday the 10th, but General Pinochet asked for a 24-hour delay to prepare the Army. The timing was settled when Admiral Huidobro drove up to the capital on Sunday with a small square of lined notepaper concealed in his sock. The message from Merino read: "D-Day is Tuesday. The hour is 0600. (*signed*) *Jose Toribio*." General Gustavo Leigh, the new Air Force commander, and General Augusto Pinochet examined it in Pinochet's house, and then wrote the word *Conforme* ("I agree") on the back of the paper and signed their names. If they had any remaining doubts about the justification for what they were planning, these had been diminished by the violent speech delivered by Senator Altamirano the previous day, which amounted to incitement to the naval ratings to rebel against their officers.

TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS remained: to enlist the support of the para-military *Carabineros*, whose leaders were mainly pro-Allende men, and to mobilise the troops without alerting the Government to the true nature of the plot. The first problem was solved when the *Carabinero* General Jovani cast in his lot with the conspirators. General Cesar Mendoza (No 7 in the strict order of seniority) followed suit. Their adhesion meant that, on the morning of the coup, Allende found himself abandoned by his police guard at the palace, who turned their armoured cars (*tanquetas*) inwards to point at him.

Security was also fairly well kept. The fleet put out to sea on Monday, supposedly to join in manoeuvres (*Operation Unitas*) with the Americans, and when it sailed back to harbour around dawn on Tuesday, it seems that Allende thought that he only had to contend with an isolated naval rising. Suspicious that something was afoot, he had telephoned to General Herman Brady (the Santiago garrison commander) around midnight, to enquire whether everything was all right. Brady, who had been close to Allende in the past, assured him that the Army was ready to deal with any contingency, although he had already received his marching orders from Pinochet. It is almost certain that Allende would not have driven to his palace on Tuesday morning had he realised that

[5] Allende, is of course, not alive to testify as to the accuracy of these quotations; my account is based on eye-witness reports gathered in Santiago.

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he was not dealing merely with a handful of dissident admirals, but with the united strength of his armed forces. He drove to his death.[6]

The Guerrilla Bluff

IN A HEATED DISCUSSION with the generals over the resignation of Admiral Ismael Huerta from the cabinet in January 1973, Allende declared that, if they ever turned against him, he would not commit suicide or seek exile in Cuba. "I will take refuge in the Cordón de Cerrillos," he warned, "and you will never get me out."

The Cordõn de Cerrillos is one of those industrial suburbs that point like knife-blades towards the centre of Santiago. These suburbs—and the squatters' camps, or *campamentos*—dotted around the outskirts of the city were viewed by the revolutionary Left as the bases for an eventual October-style insurrection. Within the state-run industries, workers were given political indoctrination and military training, under the supervision of Cuban, North Korean, and Czech instructors. Some factories were turned over to arms production. In the Madeco plant, which makes refrigerators, workers on night-shift soldered together a couple of dozen "people's tanks" (ordinary fork-lift trucks shielded by armour-plating and with heavy machine-guns mounted on top) under the guidance of a Brazilian political exile named Sergio de Moraes.

This was not an isolated example. The finance for such goings-on was either borrowed from the capital of the state-run companies themselves (the government publishing house was a notorious donor) or taken from the secret budgets of various ministries. The foreign ministry alone disposed of more than $1m a month in clandestine funds. Apprentice guerrillas looking for a job were given sinecures by state agencies like the municipal works corporation (*Cormu*) whose staff increased from 200 to 12,000 under Allende—although there was no notable increase in municipal works. And among the more than 13,000 political exiles who flooded into Allende's Chile, there were plenty of veteran terrorists to lend their expertise. The Tupamaros toured the slum suburbs in propaganda teams, and built up a rural base in the north of Chile under the leadership of Raúl Bidegain Greissing, one of the few key organisers to escape the Montevideo police.

If all this was taking place, why did armed resistance to the coup crumble so fast? There are two probable explanations. The first is that the threat to mobilise the workers' brigades had never been more than a bluff. The government had been able to call out its supporters in big demonstrations, although (to everyone but the *Guardian* correspondent) it seemed that its drawing power had been badly eroded by the time of the rally on 4 September, a week before the coup. The *Guardian* estimated the crowd that day at 1,250,000, while the *Wall Street Journal* correspondent who was also present observed that the square where the rally took place could not have held many more than 20,000, and reported how one group of particularly noisy supporters was being led round and round the block to give the general impression of greater numbers.

If the workers were no longer prepared to turn out to hear speeches, would they be ready to face the tanks? It seems that, with some exceptions (pockets of resistance such as the Sumar factory), they were not.

The second factor was that the leaders of the Left-wing parties appear to have taken the rational decision to go underground as soon as it became clear that the armed forces had not split—as the Communists had believed they would. They were not unprepared for this move. Safe houses had already been chosen, and many of the Socialist and *mirista* leaders were able to make quick getaways. Others simply ducked into the nearest friendly embassy.

It might be tempting to conclude from this that the Guerrilla Left in Chile was *pas sérieux*. But the resistance of the sniper and the saboteur continues, and is met by equally ugly forms of military repression. Whether the campaign of urban terrorism that may now be beginning will develop into a real threat to the new régime will depend on the cohesion of the armed forces, on their capacity to hold on to their initial civilian support, and on the calibre of the guerrillas them-

[6] The testimony of his own doctor and the photographs of his body make it clear that he committed suicide with the automatic weapon sent to him as a gift by Fidel Castro. He had been firing it from a window earlier that morning.

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selves. The opening attempts at armed resistance to the junta outside Santiago were pathetically amateurish.

One clash took place at Neltume, a small town on the outskirts of the Panguipulli timber reserves. On the day after the coup, a certain Jose Gregorio Liendo, famous in the outside world under his nom-de-guerre "Comandante Pepe,"[7] turned up at the head of about 50 men and attacked the local *Carabinero* post. Although the police were outnumbered by ten to one, they managed to hold out until three more *Carabineros* from a neighbouring village came to their rescue. Pepe's guerrillas were driven off into the hills, where Pepe himself (together with his wife Yolanda and three of his supporters) was captured on 19 September as he headed towards the Carririne pass into Argentina. One of the Air Force officers who took part in the hunt for Pepe told me that he gave himself up to an advance patrol without firing a single shot. "He said that he did not want to risk his wife's life. But it seems to me that he was not a serious guerrilla. What was she doing up there in the first place?"

Pepe gave his first press interview, to an enterprising young Chilean journalist, back in April 1971. He quickly gained a reputation as "Chile's Che Guevara"—a title that seems rather absurd in retrospect. He talked to the press about the need for a "continental revolution" designed to create a "union of socialist republics" in Latin America. But Pepe's chief virtue was that, unlike the *Mir's* "guerrilla theosophists," as a Communist critic once called them, he had some claim to present himself as a kind of "working-class revolutionary." He was the son of a peasant farmer from Magallanes who managed to buy himself a small farm after he won a lottery prize. He studied forestry at the University of Valdivia, but he abandoned his studies after six months in order to join the grindingly poor timber-workers on the big estates up around Panguipulli. Helped by the local left-wing governor (who helped him to escape from the police on one occasion) he organised a series of violent land-seizures.

I WAS PROBABLY THE LAST FOREIGNER to see Comandante Pepe alive. I managed to visit him in the prison in the drizzly southern city of Valdivia where he was held after his capture. I found a man in his early thirties, short, with a lean, sharp face, several days' growth of beard, and bright but barely focused eyes like polished marbles. He seemed physically well although (like Che Guevara) he was an asthmatic and is said to have been treated for lung complaints in Cuba and Hungary. He was also very cool and self-possessed, although bitter about his public image. "The world press and Chilean television have done me irreparable harm," he told me. "They gave me the title of *Comandante*, which I never wanted. They attributed acts to me that I never committed."

Pepe's wife Yolanda, whom I visited in the neighbouring municipal jail (the most modern building in Valdivia) where she was being held separately, shared his views about the media. When I asked her whether she felt that the press had made a myth (*un mito*) out of Pepe, she thought that I had used the word *humito*, which means a little puff of smoke. "Yes," she replied, "every day the press was making smoke around my husband." When I asked her whether she felt that Pepe came to see himself as a second Che Guevara—as his admirers made him out to be—she said that "That question is very seditious for my husband. I can't answer it, but I can tell you that I also put it to him."

Yolanda begged that Pepe's life should be spared, for the sake of their infant son who was staying with her father in the Nueva la Habana *población* in Santiago. Pepe himself appeared conscious of what lay in store for him: "I am not worried for myself. I will be united with the march of history." He was judged by a military court and sentenced to death for his guerrilla activities. The sentence was carried out at 8.40 p.m. on 3 October.

There was a sad Bonnie-and-Clyde atmosphere about the whole thing. One could not think of Pepe as a serious guerrilla, still less as a terrorist red in tooth and claw. But more serious contenders will follow.

The New Order

WHAT ROAD WILL Chile follow now? It will be a double tragedy if the alternative to the "Marxist experiment" proves to be nothing better than a blinkered, savagely repressive military dictatorship. The way that the generals have set out to fulfil their self-elected mission to "eradicate the Marxist cancer" makes one think of what François Mauriac, in sorrow, said about the revenge inflicted on the men of Vichy by his comrades from the French Resistance: "The idea of decapitating a head still capable of thought is unwarrantable. . . ."

In fairness, it has to be said that the generals are being reviled as much for imaginary crimes as for real ones. There has been a widespread suspension of the critical faculty in the face of improbable body-counts: the figure of 20,000 or 30,000 killed that was bandied around in the House of Commons during a recent debate, for example, or the

[7] Alastair Horne, "Commandante Pepe," ENCOUNTER, July 1971.

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much-quoted *Newsweek* claim that the Santiago morgue had processed more than 2,700 bodies in the fortnight after the September coup—a figure that later turned out to be the official tally for all bodies processed since 1 January.

No reliable estimate of the casualties since the coup is as yet available. In the order of quantities, the Chilean coup was bloody by comparison with the Greek coup in 1967, bloodless by comparison with the aftermath of the military takeover in Indonesia in 1965. It has almost certainly cost fewer lives than the brief civil war that followed the overthrow and suicide of an earlier Chilean president, Balmaceda, in 1891—when more than 10,000 people (out of a population only a fifth the present size) were killed. But such comparisons are probably not what matters. Chile's new rulers face the familiar temptation of the victors in any internal war: to claim their revenge, and to claim in self-justification that it was the other side that "started it." The continuing violence suggests that they, or their subordinates, have not been able to resist that temptation.

IN A COUNTRY as deeply polarised as Chile has become, it will not be an easy task to persuade those who formerly supported the Allende government (and this means at least 40% of the electorate) to accept the new order of things. This is why no senior officer is talking of restoring the constitutional process in less than a year. General Augusto Pinochet told me that he felt that the country was only at the beginning of the "healing process." He argued that the military must be allowed time to "depoliticise" the Chileans, who were once described by Eduardo Frei as a nation "sick with ideology." General Leigh compares the state of Chile to that of "a drain that has become clogged up with mud and debris," and it has to be "cleared away before the water can flow again."

It is not really surprising that the political leaders of the Centre and the Right are ready to accept the need for a 1–2 year period of military rule, with the exception of a group of left-wing Christian Democrats associated with Bernardo Leighton and Radomiro Tomic. For one thing, it is clear that the labour of economic reconstruction will involve unpopular austerity measures, and the party leaders would prefer to see the armed forces take responsibility for them. That way they do not lose votes. There is also the probability that the extreme Left is preparing a terrorist campaign. Again, the political party leaders would prefer to see the high command take responsibility for dealing with that.

But at the same time, the political leaders who took a stand against Allende expect to be given a place in the new system. One of the early mistakes of the junta was to fill most vacant positions—in the civil service as well as the cabinet—with retired or serving officers. This reflected both the traditional isolation of the armed forces from society in general and the conviction that it was necessary for the junta to transcend party allegiances in order to present a "national image." The influence of key civilian advisers, like Raúl Saez, who was initially seen by the junta as a kind of economic supremo, was connected with their personal *entrée* to the armed forces as well as with their personal capacities. [8]

But outside the economic sector, the armed forces established a virtual monopoly of the new administration—filling ambassadorships and even university rectorships as well as cabinet jobs. The junta overreached itself badly by placing military men as rectors in most of the universities a fortnight after the coup. By doing this, they risked losing the support of the anti-Marxist student groups who had played a leading part in the movement against Allende; and the way that Eduardo Boeninger, the brave and outspoken Christian Democratic rector of the University of Chile, was driven to resign was scarcely likely to reassure his fellow-Christian-Democrats—nor, indeed, those who believed that, by backing the coup, they were helping to preserve the possibility of a pluralistic society in Chile. Whatever the personal qualities of a man like General Cesar Ruiz Danyau, the retired Air Force chief who was appointed to replace Boeninger, he simply did not possess the intellect or the vision usually required in a university rector. The appearance of retired generals on the campuses is more alarming for Chilean society than isolated incidents like the burning of Marxist literature in Santiago.

OBVIOUSLY A GREAT DEAL WILL DEPEND on whether the junta can rebuild the economy. On the day of Allende's death, foreign reserves were

[8] Saez was only one of the civilian experts called by the junta to advise on how to straighten out the economy in the days following the coup. Orlando Saenz, the combative young president of the industrialists' association, SOFOFA, was given an important role as economic adviser to the foreign ministry. Roberto Kelly, a retired naval officer and successful private businessman, was made minister-director of the state planning agency, ODEPLAN, and a team of able young economists who had worked on a draft programme for economic reconstruction over the months before the coup quickly found jobs in the administration. A month after the coup, General Rolando Gonzalez, an indecisive army officer who was originally handed the economics portfolio, was replaced by Fernando Leniz, the former president of *El Mercurio*, the major independent newspaper that had played a decisive role in the opposition to Allende. As these appointments suggest, the junta soon grasped the need to place the economy under the control of qualified men.

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down to $3½m; the foreign debt had mounted to some $4 billion; and inflation was running at an annual rate of 350%. The junta's attempt to restore realistic prices and exchange rates will mean some temporary hardship; but it is possibly the only way of restoring incentives for local manufacturers and foreign investors. Similarly, the reorganisation of state-run firms will mean an end to the featherbedding of political favourites and, therefore, more unemployment; but it is also one of the ways to curb the deficits of the public corporations which were one of the prime sources of inflation.

The junta will have to contend with an attempt to isolate it, both internally and externally. It is ironic that many of those who attacked the Americans for limiting credit lines to the Allende government are now calling for an economic blockade of the "fascists" who have replaced him. Such a campaign may fail, but if it succeeds it might help to make the régime still more repressive. If the generals cannot sort out the economy, they will be compelled to fall back on force as the means of keeping themselves in power.

WHAT KIND OF POLITICAL SYSTEM will eventually emerge from the Chilean imbroglio is still obscure. It will obviously be hard to restore the former system now that the left-wing parties that represented some 40% of the electorate have been outlawed. There are a certain number of "corporatists," both within the high command and among the team of jurists who have been working on a draft constitution, who are fundamentally out of sympathy with the democratic system in any case. They are probably in a minority, but it is an influential one.

The problem is that the system broke down under the stresses imposed on it by Allende and his fellow-Marxists, and cannot be reconstructed overnight. To say that Allende was primarily responsible for destroying Chile's democratic system is not an attempt to cover up the violence and blunders of his successors, but to show where the tragedy began. Those who compare the fashionable mythology that has been woven around Allende with his actions may be reminded of Burke's words about the revolutionaries in France in a different epoch: "They are the same men and the same designs that they were from the first, though varied in their appearance. It was the very same animal that at first crawled about in the shape of a caterpillar, that you now see rise into the air and expand his wings into the sun. . . ."[9] Allende and his friends cannot be absolved by what has happened since the coup. The men now painted as martyrs for democracy are the same men that smuggled in machine-guns, camouflaged as mango ice-cream, and meant to use them.

[9] Edmund Burke, "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly in answer to some Objections to his Book on Foreign Affairs" (1791).

Fear

Your fear is powerful
metaphysical
mine a junior clerk
with a briefcase

with a file
and a questionnaire
when was I born
what means of support
what haven't I done
what don't I believe in

what am I doing here
when will I stop pretending
where will I go
next

Tadeusz Różewicz

translated by Adam Czerniawski

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EAST & WEST

The "Scandal" of 1917

German Money & Bolshevik Honour

By Joel Carmichael

"... *but money answereth all things.*"
ECCLESIASTES (X, 19)

"... *For money has a power above the stars and fate....*"
SAMUEL BUTLER, *Hudibras* (1678)

"*You pays your money and you takes your choice.*"
PUNCH (1846)

THE BOLSHEVIKS were "swept into power"—in the terms of their own mythology—by a tidal wave of History. Armed with the Great Key of Marxism, their brainpower and boldness set out to remake the world.

Trotsky, the most urbane and articulate of the Bolshevik spokesmen, played a fundamental role in promoting this mythology, especially since he was the only Bolshevik read outside Party circles. His *History of the Russian Revolution*, as well as his autobiography, broadcast "official" Bolshevism independently of his conflict with the victorious Soviet faction of Joseph Stalin.

It was while I was writing a biography of Trotsky that I began to be perplexed by the "scandal" of July 1917. This was provoked by revelations in the Petrograd press to the effect that the Bolsheviks had been receiving money from the German Imperial Government and hence were "agents" of an enemy government in war-time. The disclosures of the secret German subsidy came at a time when a fiasco at the front coincided with what seemed to be a Bolshevik attempt at a *coup d'état*. It also followed in the wake of the well-known fact of Lenin's arrival from Switzerland in a "sealed train" conveniently provided by the German Army.

In the first draft of my biography I had merely mentioned the German subsidy without exploring it. I should have been quite pleased to spare myself the labour of examining the background of the scandal, since the German subsidy, or so it seemed to me, whether a hard and incontrovertible fact or not, could hardly have played a cardinal role.

But ultimately I could not, of course, avoid discussing a question that, whether or not it was fundamental for an understanding of the Bolshevik enterprise itself, bore directly on an assessment of Trotsky's character. Both in his *History* and in his *Life*—doubtless his most important works—he devotes a whole chapter to an indignant denial of the charges and an impassioned defence of Bolshevik integrity.

It is plainly a little embarrassing for a biographer to appear to be attacking his own subject; if an appearance of churlishness is to be avoided an accommodation must be found between the demands of accuracy and the indulgence due the man whose importance, after all, is what makes him worth writing about. From the point of view I had unreflectingly carried with me from my first reading of Trotsky as a student, the subject of the "German money" was unspeakably *corny*. I remember my amusement at Trotsky's ruthless performance in these two works of his—his lofty contempt, his arsenal of invective, his sledge-hammer sarcasm—as he tore into Kerensky for repeating the accusation in the 1920s. Poor Kerensky, I had thought, chuckling away, what a clown!

Elementary conscientiousness obliged me at least to look a bit more deeply into the whole question. It turned out to be simpler than I had thought.

AS DISCLOSED in 1917, the July "scandal" had not amounted to much; I mean as a matter of documentation. The Kerensky government had intercepted, it seemed, a courier between the German General Staff and Lenin. The courier (a non-commissioned Russian Officer) was supposed to have been despatched from a prisoner-of-war camp inside Germany with money for Lenin to sabotage the front.

The story was so puerile, in fact, that the easiest way to explode it might have seemed merely to hold up to view its absurdities. Lenin and his closest associates had taken to their

JOEL CARMICHAEL *is a well-known American author and translator. He translated the two volumes of the Revolution Diaries of N. N. Sukhanov (O.U.P.). His two articles on Trotsky, "The Agony of a Revolutionary", appeared in the May and June 1972 numbers of* ENCOUNTER *and his full-length biography is being published by Hodder & Stoughton (London) and Ullstein (Berlin).*

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heels, but that could have been easily explained (as Trotsky did) by a common sensical fear of being lynched. If the only evidence, in fact, had been what had been exposed during the scandal of July 1917, Trotsky's furious reaction might well have remained convincing. The whole thing was simply a "slander" by the "class enemy", aimed at defaming the Revolution.

There was, to be sure, another piece of evidence that came out a few years after the October 1917 putsch. Eduard Bernstein, the highly respected German Social Democrat, had written two articles in *Vorwärts* (January 1921), the organ of the German Social Democratic Party and hence, at the moment, was well connected with the German Government of the day. (In fact he served for a time as a high official in the Treasury Department.) On the basis of information received from an authoritative person in the German Foreign Office, Bernstein stated flatly that the Bolsheviks had in fact received money from the Imperial Government.

After his first article Bernstein was instantly called a "liar," "lackey of the bourgeoisie", and the like, by the German Communist Party organ (*Rote Fahne*). In his second article he challenged the Communist Party to face charges of slander in any court of their choice. When they failed to respond he did nothing further. At the time, of course, the German and Soviet Governments were wooing each other; there was a "natural" (*i.e.*, political) explanation of Bernstein's apparent withdrawal.

In the 1950s "hard" evidence began appearing, mainly in *Germany and the Revolution in Russia 1915–1918*, edited by Z. A. B. Zeman and published by the Oxford University Press (1956–1958), which for the first time presented a small selection of German Foreign Office memoranda and letters outlining in broad strokes the relations between the German Imperial Government and the Russian revolutionaries, especially the Bolsheviks. The whole subject had been pioneered in various articles, notably by George Katkov, associated at the time with St. Antony's College, Oxford.[1] A beginning could be said to have been made in unravelling a bizarre relationship.

IT WAS A RELATIONSHIP that hinged, apparently, on the career of a man known primarily for his Marxist journalism, Alexander Israel Helphand. He was born in 1867 into a lower-middle-class Jewish family in Russia; graduated from a Swiss university; and was at one time a close friend of Trotsky (his junior by 12 years).

Trotsky had had the greatest respect for Helphand's intellectual powers. They had collaborated on the theory of "Permanent Revolution", a quasi-innovation in Marxism generally associated with Trotsky. It was of no little practical interest because in developing a theory of how a Socialist party could by-pass the "bourgeois revolution" in a backward agricultural country like Russia, Helphand and Trotsky had provided a Marxist "justification" for the Bolshevik *putsch*.

Helphand, in whose "bulldog's head" (as Trotsky put it) "thoughts of wealth were intermingled with thoughts of revolution", had in point of fact made a personal fortune. Discontented with his career in the German Social Democracy, Helphand had moved to Constantinople around 1910–11; apparently he had been a trader in commodity futures, a representative of various German firms, and a friend of Turkish politicians and bureaucrats.

Early in January 1915 Helphand had been introduced to the German Ambassador in Constantinople. He pointed out that the "interests of the German Government were identical with those of the Russian revolutionaries", and that he, Helphand, saw it as his duty to "organise a rising on a broad basis" against the Tsarist régime after "creating unity" among the revolutionaries. The corollary of this analysis was that Helphand be given money to transmit to revolutionary groups, primarily the Bolsheviks, for propaganda and agitation.[2]

A couple of months later Helphand followed up this conversation with a memorandum sketching in some detail the steps he thought necessary in order to smash the Russian Empire. They revolved around a dual policy of support both for the Russian revolutionaries and for the minority ethnic groups aspiring to independence. His proposal, on the face of it alluring, was wholeheartedly accepted by competent elements in the German Foreign Office and on the General Staff.[3]

It is not certain that Trotsky knew of Helphand's intimacy with German officialdom at the time. He denounced him[4] and "broke off" with him merely because Helphand had sold out to "petty bourgeois nationalism"—*i.e.*, on the "theoretical level" Helphand developed thoroughly "Marxist" arguments proving, in the manner

[1] George Katkov, "German Foreign Office Documents on Financial Support to the Bolsheviks in 1917", *International Affairs* (Vol. 32, April 1956), pp. 181–9; see also *St Antony's Papers*, No. XII (*Soviet Affairs*, No. 3, 1962), and his book *Russia 1917: The February Revolution* (1967).

[2] Z. A. B. Zeman and W. B. Scharlau, *The Merchant of Revolution: The Life of Alexander Israel Helphand (Parvus)* (1965), p. 28.

[3] Z. A. B. Zeman (ed.), *Germany and the Revolution in Russia 1915–1918* (1958), Document No. 1 *et seq;* Appendix 1.

[4] *Nashe Slovo*, No. 15, 14/2/1915: "An Obituary on a Living Friend."

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of German Marxists generally, that a victory of imperial Germany (with its broad culture, its Social Democracy, its advanced working class, its trades-unions) over backward, peasant Russia, was the finest thing possible for the Revolution. Practically, however, Trotsky benefited from the German funds himself. A little newspaper he was editing in Paris, with the Menshevik leader, Martov, was largely subsidised by the rich Rumanian Socialist, Christo Rakovsky, himself on the payroll of the German Foreign Office.[5]

In any case it was Helphand whose international business interests—ramified in a trading network anchored in the neutral Scandinavian countries and encompassing the illicit trade between Russia and Germany that was flourishing in the very midst of the War—provided the camouflage for the funds transmitted by the German Government to the Bolshevik Party.

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The whole figure of Helphand seems to have cinematic flourish: bald and corpulent, with a huge fleshy head and an overheavy torso balanced on legs so spindly he walked about "waving his arms like an orang-outang." From the documents one gets the impression that attractive blondes and torrents of champagne in posh hotel suites surged back and forth against a background of vast business deals.

Zeman's documents seemed to me entirely convincing, at least as to the role of the Germans. The memoranda written by Richard von Kühlmann, the Imperial Secretary of State in Berlin, could hardly have been forged (to say nothing of the marginal comments of the Kaiser). In addition, the internal cohesiveness of the Germans' point of view seemed incontestable. As the two-front War went on, their desperation became almost tangible. Zeman later collaborated with a German scholar, W. B. Scharlau; in 1965 they published *Merchant of Revolution*, a biography of Helphand, in which his key role emerges with striking clarity. He had truly, in the Marxist phrase, acted as midwife to a new society.

But though the proof—on the German side—seemed to me quite convincing, I had to acknowledge the absence of Russian proof (of, say, any hand-signed receipts from Lenin, if such items be conceivable).

On the Russian side, of course, no records were kept (how could they have been); but the German Imperial Government had a normal bureaucracy, honeycombed with "channels." The aroma of the entire enterprise, from the German point of view, sharply emerges from a handful of excerpts.

From Jagow (State Secretary of Foreign Ministry) to the Secretary of the Treasury, 6 July 1915:

> "Five million marks are required for the promotion of revolutionary propaganda in Russia . . . charging it to Article VI, Section II of the extraordinary budget. . . ." (Zeman, p. 3, Document 4)

From Brockdorff-Rantzau (Minister in Copenhagen) to the German Chancellor, 21 December 1915:

> ". . . Dr Helphand [said] about 20 million roubles would be required to get the Russian revolution completely organised. This total could not possibly be distributed at once, as there would be a danger of the source being discovered. However, . . . he had suggested that . . . one million roubles should at once be put at the disposal of his confidential agent. . . ." (Zeman, p. 9, Document 7)

From Brockdorff-Rantzau to the German Chancellor, 23 January 1916:

> ". . . The sum of a million roubles put at [Helphand's] disposal was immediately sent on, and has already reached Petrograd and been devoted to the purposes for which it was intended. . . ." (Zeman, p. 14, Document 11)

From Brockdorff-Rantzau to the Foreign Ministry (after the February 1917 breakdown of Tsarism), 2 April 1917:

> "In . . . case [we are both militarily and economically in a position to continue the war effectively until the autumn] it is essential that we try now to create the greatest possible . . . chaos in Russia. To this end, any patently apparent intervention in the course of the Russian revolution should be avoided. . . . We should, on the other hand, make every effort surreptitiously to deepen the differences between the moderate and the extremist parties, for

[5] Zeman and Scharlau, p. 155; David Shub, "Lenin i Vil'gelm II", *Novy, Zhurnal* (June 1959), pp. 226-7.

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it is greatly in our interests that the latter should gain the upper hand, since a drastic change would then be inevitable and take forms that would necessarily shake the very existence of the Russian empire. . . ." (Zeman, p. 31, Document 22)

From Grünau (Foreign Ministry Liaison Officer at the Imperial Court) to the Foreign Ministry, on 21 April 1917:

"Lenin's entry into Russia successful. He is working exactly as we would wish. . . ." (Zeman, p. 51, Document 81)

From Nasse (Military Attaché of the German Legation in Bern) on 9 May 1917:

". . . After my discussions with Dr Shklovsky and P. Axelrod [Shklovsky was a Bolshevik, Axelrod the veteran Menshevik] . . . I carefully sounded several leading representatives of the different groups within the pacifist Socialist party. . . . After they had shown clear and, I might almost say, joyful willingness to accept financial support for the specific purpose of work for peace, I said that I, for my part, would be happy to grant considerable sums for such a noble, humanitarian, and internationalist aim." (Zeman, p. 55, Document 57)

From Zimmerman (German State Secretary) to the German Minister in Stockholm, on 9 May 1917:

"Dr Helphand . . . has done us a number of notable services in the course of the war, especially, working under the Imperial Minister in Copenhagen in influencing the Danish trades-unions in a direction extremely favourable to us. Since then, Dr Helphand has been granted Prussian citizenship . . . I would ask Your Excellency to give him all possible assistance." (Zeman, p. 56, Document 58)

From Bussche (the German Under-Secretary of State) to the German Minister in Copenhagen, 18 August 1917:

". . . The suspicion that Lenin is a German agent has been energetically countered in Switzerland and Sweden at our instigation. . . ." (Zeman, p. 69, Document 69)

From Richard von Kühlmann (State Secretary) to the Foreign Ministry Liaison Officer at General Headquarters, 29 September 1917:

". . . The military operations on the Eastern front . . . were seconded by intensive undermining activities inside Russia on the part of the Foreign Ministry. Our first interest . . . was to further nationalist and separatist endeavours as far as possible and to give strong support to the revolutionary elements. . . . The Bolshevik movement could never have attained the scale . . . it has today without our continual support. There is every indication that the movement will continue to grow, and the same is true of the Finnish and Ukrainianin dependence movements." (Zeman, p. 70, Document 71)

From Kühlmann to the State Secretary of the Treasury, 9 November 1917:

". . . I have the honour to request your Excellency to put the sum of 15 million marks at the disposal of the Foreign Ministry, for use on political propaganda in Russia, charging it to Paragraph 6, Section II of the extraordinary budget. . . ." (Zeman, p. 75, Document 75)

From Lersner (the German Liaison Officer at General Headquarters) to the Foreign Ministry, on 9 November 1917:

"A revolution has broken out in Petrograd. . . . The victory of the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet is desirable from our point of view. I therefore request that you exploit the intercepted radio transmission for propaganda to this end." (Zeman, p. 75, Document 76)

From Czernin (the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister) to the German Chancellor, on 10 November 1917:

"Whether or not Lenin and his colleagues will . . . maintain supremacy . . . is probably a question nobody can answer. For this very reason, however, it would seem essential to exploit this moment, and to offer them all the help they would need to produce *faits accomplis* in the peace question. If the Leninists were to succeed even in bringing about the proposed armistice . . . we should have won almost a complete victory on the Russian sector. . . ." (Zeman, p. 76, Document 77)

There is even a touch of dramatic irony in a remark made by Brockdorff-Rantzau, at the very inception of the Germans' sophisticated, intelligent, and ultimately disastrous manoeuvre, long before the collapse of the Tsarist régime and the still more far-reaching victory of the Bolshevik putsch. In a letter to the Under-State-Secretary (on 14 August 1915), Brockdorff-Rantzau, an upright idealist, voices a premonition but only to quash it:

". . . It *might perhaps* be risky to want to use the powers ranged behind Helphand, but it would *certainly* be an admission of our own weakness if we were to refuse their services out of fear of not being able to *direct* them." (Zeman, p. 5, Document 5)

The notion of "directing" such forces must surely evoke nostalgia for the innocent self-assurance of that European generation: so solid, so calm.

NOW, ALL THIS SEEMED TO ME proof of the German involvement. On the other hand I still had to acknowledge the absence of anything like handsigned receipts from Lenin (if that is conceivable, politically or historiographically).

Still, there was *some* evidence. As Professor Leonard Schapiro has pointed out,[6] Lenin vigorously denied having had any financial discussions with his aides (notably Fürstenberg

[6] Leonard Schapiro, *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (2nd ed.), pp. 176–7. Vera Vladimirova, *Revolyutsiya 1917 Goda (Chronika Sobytii)* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1923–4). See also: S. P. Mel'qunov, *Zolotoi Nemetskii Kliuch Bol'shevikov* (Paris, 1940).

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and Vorovski, who worked openly for one of Helphand's cover organisations), but references to substantial sums of money appeared, as it seems through carelessness, in Lenin's *Collected Works*, accompanied to be sure by an anodyne explanation.

Yet aside from the hard evidence, what finally convinced me, as it were psychologically, was Trotsky himself. More and more his treatment of this whole question of the "German money" appeared to me to be remarkably disingenuous, both in his *History* and in his *Life* (to say nothing of his public utterances in the heat of the fray!).

In his *History*, for instance, he quotes Sukhanov, the celebrated memoirist of the revolutionary period. Like the public at large, Sukhanov was completely taken in by the Bolsheviks' protestations of innocence. He found Lenin's behaviour simply unbelievable.

> "Besides the accusation of insurrection [*i.e.*, the abortive Bolshevik putsch of July 1917] a monstrous slander, believed by hundreds of thousands and millions of people, had been directed at Lenin. He was accused of the crime, vile and shameful from every point of view, of being in the pay of the German General Staff. . . . It was impossible *simply to ignore this*. . . . But Lenin *went into hiding* with such a charge hanging over him.
>
> "This was something quite special, unexampled and incomprehensible. Any other mortal would have demanded an investigation and trial even in the most unfavourable conditions. Any other mortal would personally and publicly have done everything possible to rehabilitate himself."[7]

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Trotsky retorts: "Yes, 'any other mortal' ", then draws a pious moral: "But no other mortal could have become an object of such raging hatred to the ruling classes."[8] Yet Sukhanov had shown up the absurdity of this remark:

> "Was [Lenin] in any real danger? Preposterous, in the summer of 1917! There could be no question of lynch-law, of the death penalty, or of hard labour. . . . Lenin risked absolutely nothing but imprisonment. The example of his comrades completely confirms all this. Many of them were arrested and put on trial for the same crimes. They safely sat out six weeks or two months in prison and went on with their writing there. With their martyrs' haloes they served as an inexhaustible source of agitation. . . . Then . . . they returned to their posts."

If anything could highlight the absurdity of Trotsky's defence of Lenin's flight it was the actual reaction of the Soviet leaders who were in *de facto* charge of the government. Most of them were violent opponents of Lenin's, and convinced that the story of the German subsidy was true at bottom despite the puerility of the contemporary documentation. Though Tsereteli and Chkheidze, the Menshevik leaders of the Soviet at the time, did not consider Lenin an actual German "agent"—he was first and last only an "agent" of his own ideology—on the other hand they thought it terribly obvious that he *must* have been receiving money from the German Army. But they also thought the Government "case" against Lenin full of holes; they thought it wildly improbable that the Government could demonstrate the German connection as a legal matter, and, since the Bolsheviks were members of the Soviet, discrediting them would discredit the Soviet equally. From their point of view, in any case, the primary iniquity of the Bolsheviks lay in what they were doing *openly*—sabotaging the front.

Nevertheless they were prepared to rally to Lenin's support. When Stalin, in a state of extreme nervous tension, was sent to ask Tsereteli and Chkheidze to request the press not to disclose the German connection, they complied as a matter of course. (It was only because one Right-wing paper refused to accept the ban that the news came out at all.[9])

THUS IT SEEMED OBVIOUS TO ME that Trotsky's explanation of Lenin's flight as due to the hatred of the "ruling classes" was supremely bogus. It was this, in fact, perhaps even more than the "hard" evidence that convinced me.

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[7] N. N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution 1917* (1955, tr. and ed. Joel Carmichael), p. 472.

[8] L. D. Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution* (Max Eastman, 1931), Vol. 11, p. 95.

[9] I. G. Tsereteli, *Vospominaniya o Fevral'skoy Revolyutsii* (2 Vols., Paris and The Hague, 1963), Vol. II, pp. 332–341.

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The speciousness of Trotsky's argument is confirmed by a small point in his *History*—when he records Lenin asking him at this time: *"Aren't they getting ready to shoot us all?"*[10]

This seems to me to suggest that the German subsidy was a *fact*, and hence that Lenin simply couldn't risk a systematic enquiry. Wasn't *that* why he had taken to his heels?

The whole chapter Trotsky devotes to this question in his *History* is, if possible, still more dishonest. In it he discusses everything under the sun—the French Revolution, Isaac Newton, Rasputin, anti-Semitism—yet he fails even to mention Eduard Bernstein's two articles in January 1921. It is the same for the chapter in his *Life*, where he takes such delight in tearing to pieces Kerensky's defectively documented and clumsily presented account.[11]

IT ALSO SEEMED CLEAR TO ME, however, at the same time, that in defending Lenin's acceptance of Ludendorff's "sealed train," he might well have been tailoring the *form* of his defence to the possibility that at some time in the future the true story of the German subsidy might come out—as it did, forty years later. Trotsky sums up the "sealed train" transaction in this passage:

> "On Ludendorff's part this was an adventure arising out of Germany's grave military situation. Lenin was taking advantage of Ludendorff's calculations while keeping to his own. Ludendorff said to himself: 'Lenin will overthrow the patriots, then I'll strangle Lenin and his friends.' Lenin said to himself: 'I'll travel by Ludendorff's train, then pay him for the service in my own way.' "[12]

Read today, doesn't this argument seem to be contrived to accommodate both the "sealed train" and, tacitly, a *potential* charge that money had changed hands?

No one could maintain, after all, that Lenin had formed his characteristic views *on behalf of* the German Imperial Government. Consequently, if he accepted a train from Ludendorff, why should he not accept money? One service to help a revolutionary make a revolution is surely like any other. The subsequent German defeat, which was what enabled the Bolsheviks to stay in power, made it possible to reconcile, in principle, Bolshevik Marxism and German money—history proved to have been on the side of the Bolsheviks.

In short, I came to the conclusion that the "case" for the German subsidisation of the Bolsheviks was amply demonstrated by the German Foreign Office documents, the internal Russian evidence, the documentation of Helphand's career, and, of course, by Eduard Bernstein's testimony (no one ever contested either Bernstein's acumen or his probity.)

HOW VERY STRANGE it is that the whole discussion of this remarkable conspiracy has largely revolved around attitudes towards Lenin's personal integrity! Even among "hard-nosed" students of history, including Marxists who pride themselves on just this hardness, there has been a curiously sentimental addiction to traditional views of sincerity, integrity, honour. Enemies of Lenin and of his ideas, and for that matter of Marxism, have refused to believe that he could ever have "stooped" to take money from German "imperialists."

After the event the German officials involved also turned rather coy. While the question of "honour" as such could not have affected them at the time—why not subvert any enemy from within?—the establishment of the Bolshevik state, with its unforseeable potentialities for upheaval throughout the world, made what might otherwise have been a wily stratagem a source of acute embarrassment. This may explain the reticence of some key figures (Kühlmann, Ludendorff, Bethmann-Hollweg, Helfferich) in mentioning activities attested to by their own memoranda in the archives.

One is struck by the reluctance of, say, the great Russian historian, Michael T. Florinsky, even to assess the evidence. And even those who, like the late David Shub, take the German subsidy for granted, nevertheless continue (as it seems to me) to be unduly influenced by the ideological explanations of events rather than by the events themselves as they happened.

WHAT OF THE NOTION OF "integrity"? There may well be something inherently embarrassing about money, about "*filthy lucre*", and especially money coming from foreigners. Despite the notorious fact that nations have, historically, tirelessly pursued their interests by meddling in the affairs of others, an accusation of anyone as accepting money from a foreign source invariably implies something opprobrious.

In 1958, when Dr Zeman's book appeared, I was in the habit of having tea with Julius Martov's sister, Lydia Dan, widow of Theodor Dan, another Menshevik leader in 1917. She had just read Zeman's book and asked me, a little tensely, what I thought of his documentation. At that time I had scarcely glanced at it. I began by referring cautiously to the fact that no real difference of principle was involved—Lenin's

[10] Trotsky, *History*, Vol. II, ch.iv; *Life*, ch. 26.
[11] Alexander Kerensky, *The Catastrophe* (New York, 1928).
[12] Trotsky, *Life*, Vol. II, p. 30 (Russian).

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accepting the "sealed train" from the German Army was identical with accepting money for promoting his own aims.

Mrs Dan (together with her brother Martov an almost life-long opponent of Lenin's) cut me short. Drawing herself up, she said with the utmost emphasis: "Lenin would never, never, *never* have taken such money!" This was enough to silence me. Who would want to attack the honour of a Russian revolutionary, a sincere Marxist, an old Bolshevik?

Nevertheless it is plainly jejune to deflect the discussion of this question into an assessment of Lenin's honour. The real point is surely of a different order entirely, and for an historian far more profound: Was the German subsidy a *factor* of the Bolshevik triumph? What is often forgotten in the whole discussion is the *size* of the German subsidy. Eduard Bernstein was told in Berlin that it came to *more than 50 million gold marks*. In today's currency that comes to something like half a billion dollars, or several hundred million pounds.[13]

THE SUM is simply staggering. And it needs to be contrasted with the small size of the Bolshevik Party in 1917.

The millions were put to very good use—German funds helped to maintain a vast Bolshevik press throughout the summer and autumn of 1917. It numbered some 41 periodicals, 21 in Russian and the rest in various minority languages. Professor Schapiro has shown that the Bolshevik Party dues—that is, all avowable Bolshevik sources of revenue—could not remotely explain even a fraction of the vast expenditures entailed by such a press, especially since the editions, numbering more than a million-and-a-half copies a week, were generally given away free.[14]

Thus the German subsidy was used to penetrate public opinion (and morale in the army), at first with a cluster of thoroughly general and non-"Marxist" slogans—basically the termination of the War plus the dual theme of "*Bread & Land.*"

No student of the Russian Revolution can overestimate the effectiveness of this press campaign. Not only was the population conditioned, rather easily, to these attractive themes, but—far more important for the Bolsheviks—it learned to think of the Bolsheviks as an entirely respectable group, no more than the most forthright among the other respectable parties in the respectable Soviet. It was the German subsidy that enabled the Bolsheviks to gain a foothold in the countryside and the towns through innocuous "democratic" agitation.

Nor did the subsidisation of the Bolsheviks stop with the October *putsch*. The Germans had to make sure that the feeble, isolated Bolshevik apparatus was not replaced by other forces that might resume the struggle on the Eastern front against the German Army. They continued maintaining the Bolsheviks until well-nigh the eve of the German collapse on the Western front.

From the point of view of any sincere Marxist, the entire revolutionary "legitimacy" of the Bolshevik enterprise is undermined by the importance of the German subsidy. Has it anything whatever to do with Lenin's "honour"?

THE NOTION OF LENIN as an "agent" of the German government was a notion close to the heart of Russian Monarchists but it was and remains grotesquely misleading. Still it is hardly more sensible to dismiss the evidence of the German subsidy on the theory that Lenin could never have become a German agent, or collaborated with the Kaiser, or accepted funds from the Imperial Treasury because of his highminded and unwavering devotion to the Revolution. It was precisely Lenin's intransigence—and more particularly his determination to stop the War as a way of promoting the Revolution—that led the German Government to see in him not an agent, but the *ally* they needed to immobilise the Eastern Front.

Helphand's original proposal (in January 1915) to the German Government, that they consider the aims of the Russian revolutionaries as identical with their own, had been overtaken by events. The identity of aims now brought about a *bona fide* convergence of behaviour: it was only Machiavellian common sense for the German Government to offer money to various revolutionary groups and for them to take it. The internal collapse of the Russian Government after the February Revolution had no effect on German policy. Their goal remained the complete immobilisation of the Eastern Front. *Who* immobilised it was immaterial.

But for the Russian revolutionaries the situation had changed fundamentally. Once the Tsarist régime—the paramount target of all agitation in the revolutionary movement for so many Russian generations—had crumbled, what could be the "justification" (in Marxist terms) of sabotaging the new "revolutionary" régime?

The régime that had emerged in February was

[13] And that is estimating the value on the low side. An official German government economist told me that the purchasing value of a gold mark today would be between 30 to 50 Deutschmarks. Reckoning an average of 40, and translating it into dollars at about 3 Deutschmarks per dollar, the figure would come to over *600 million dollars.*

[14] Schapiro, *History of the Communist Party...* pp. 176–7; *Perepiska Sekretariata,* Vol. I, pp. 50–51.

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made up to a large extent of Socialists elected by the Soviet, democratically representing the bulk of the population. How could a Marxist party justify in its own eyes taking money from an imperialist power for the purpose of undermining its long-time colleagues in the movement for a new society?

From this point of view the boldness of Lenin's gamble—its scope no less than its camouflage—is extraordinary.

THE GAMBLE was uniquely personal. In that particular historical constellation there was, quite literally, no one but Lenin who could "deliver" the tightly-knit Bolshevik apparatus. No one but Lenin could have made a decision for the Bolshevik Party to take power, and then have swung the Party around to his views. Hence there was no one else to whom it would have been sensible to transmit vast sums.

The desperation of the German General Staff presented him with a special opportunity: it radically altered his personal circumstances, which in the early part of 1917 had been very oppressive. Before the arrangement about the "sealed train" he had felt "stoppered up in a bottle." He would gladly, he said, have made a pact with the Devil if necessary to get to Petrograd.[15] Moreover, his decision must have been made quite abruptly, since he did not even have time to prepare his followers in Petrograd for the new course.

For the "thinking Marxists" in the upper strata of the Party Lenin had to work up a powerful and persuasive theory that would justify a Socialist seizure of power in a backward agricultural country (especially in view of his contrary "position" of many years' standing). In the event, of course, it was child's play; though it coincided rather closely with Trotsky's and Helphand's own theory of Permanent Revolution, the resemblances could be shrugged aside under the pressure of action, and once Trotsky had moved over to the Bolsheviks, he could be depended upon not to want to claim "credit" for it.

Lenin proclaimed the new switch only when he arrived in Petrograd in April 1917. The stupefaction of even his immediate entourage was manifest.

Thus the spiritual panoply of the Bolshevik *putsch* was made up, as it were, of three concentric spheres:

1. For "The Masses" the only agitational approach possible was, of course, a series of broad, common-sense, "popular" slogans. There could be no question of giving *them* the Marxist "justification" of the *putsch*. Marxism, slippery even for its adepts, cannot be unloaded wholesale.

2. The upper strata of the Party, the Philosophers, were given a rapid course in Lenin's new views. For them Marxism was re-analysed in order to provide the right matrix for the new course. With all his authority he required some weeks to indoctrinate them effectively (afterwards, of course, they were just as dogmatic about the new views as they had been about the old).

3. As for the handful of intimates at the summit of the Party, they were quite aware, no doubt, of the involvement with the German General Staff, and understood the risks. The German subsidy could not, of course, even be hinted at in revolutionary circles of any shading. The subversion of revolutionary institutions that had come into being through the collapse of Tsarism could mean only that the Bolsheviks were aiming at power for themselves *alone*.

Now, this seems to me the only vantage-point from which to assess Lenin's "honour." In a gamble in which each faction was speculating on the destruction of the other, it was—from Lenin's own private point of view—perfectly proper to accept the subsidy just as it had been proper to accept the "sealed train."

Taking Lenin's Marxist sincerity for granted, we can imagine his conceiving of the October *putsch* as a mere prelude to the Revolution throughout the world, or at the very least in industrial Europe. The shape of coming events must have appeared to him something like this:

Behind the propaganda barrage on behalf of "general objectives" (quite unrelated to specific Marxist aims), the Bolsheviks would seize and hold power until the tidal wave of the Revolution turned the world upside down and incidentally swept away its provisional sponsors, the German Imperial Government.

LENIN WON THE GAMBLE, or rather the Germans lost it. But Lenin did not win the gamble *as a Marxist*. Not one of his forecasts came true, not one spiritual "pre-condition" of the *putsch*, not a single Marxist claim in general—least of all the claim that the handful of men who staged a successful *coup d'état* against confused adversaries "incarnated" or "represented" an historic upsurge.

When the World Revolution failed to appear—another way of saying they had misunderstood the situation—the *parvenu* régime found itself the *de facto* "enemy of the people" and was obliged to establish itself by installing one of the most ferocious apparatuses of repression in history.

[15] N. K. Krupskaya, *Vospominaniya o Lenine* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 273–6.

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The Bolsheviks' isolation was indicated quite unmistakably by Lenin himself. Consider the composition of the Constituent Assembly, for generations the ultimate goal of the entire revolutionary movement (including the Bolsheviks, who had backed it fully even after their *putsch*). The Assembly came together a few weeks after the *putsch,* on 5 January 1918. It held one session and was immediately dispersed by armed soldiers and sailors on the orders of the new dictatorship. According to Lenin himself the Bolsheviks did not receive more than 25% of the total vote, and even together with their turbulent allies, the Left Social Revolutionaries, did not control even a third of the total. This was demonstrated on 5 January, when a basic Bolshevik resolution was turned down 237 to 138. In Lenin's words: while in a "bourgeois" republic the demand for a Constituent Assembly was "fully legitimate", things were different under the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

It was just this minority isolation that generated repression. But with repression in the name of the People, of the General Will or of History, comes a need for an explanation, an excuse, a rationalisation, a Myth. There the success of the Bolsheviks has been well-nigh matchless. The historic events themselves have been totally obliterated, and otherwise made "understandable" only as elements in the vast edifice of falsification epitomised in the Stalin school. The mythology of the Bolsheviks has been so successful that even their opponents have been blinded.

TROTSKY'S OWN ROLE in this is clear. As an advocate of the Bolshevik Party he was performing one more service for the Revolution—defending his own "revolutionary honour" at the same time as the Bolshevik Party's.

It can hardly be doubted that he was aware of the German subsidy. While Commissar for Foreign Affairs, then War Commissar, he was bound to know of the vast funds that had kept the Bolshevik press going, as well as of the various Bolsheviks working for Helphand's cover-operations and acting as Lenin's couriers. And at Brest-Litovsk, too, he must have been aware of the contrast between the open "debates", apparently revolving around principles, and the background of unmentionable mutual dependency.

One point in all this seemed, at least to me, peculiarly piquant, since I was, after all, considering these events from the point of view of Trotsky's biography. It was the German subsidy that made Trotsky a world figure, catapulting him into the leadership of the Bolshevik Party at a crucial moment. The tension in July must have been extreme. Whether the Bolsheviks initiated a *putsch,* which misfired, or somewhat indecisively tried to take advantage of the unrest in Petrograd against the background of a fiasco at the front, the first press disclosures of the German subsidy forced the Bolshevik summit out of action. Lenin, obliged to flee, had to relinquish the tactical and indeed the strategic command. (It is very tempting to speculate, considering the defectiveness of the government case at the time, whether it could have been Lenin himself who had "leaked" some bogus information in order to camouflage the real evidence as long as possible.)

Trotsky, despite his newness on the scene and the loathing felt for him by the Bolshevik leadership, could take over the command partly because he was *not* a Bolshevik—*i.e.*, could not plausibly be accused of being in German pay—and more especially because he was a primary figure in the democratic Soviet, to which he was elected chairman before the *putsch.*

In the absence of the Bolshevik summit Trotsky was in such a strong position that he could not only stage-manage the *putsch* as a whole, but could define its constitutional nature—*i.e.*, who was seizing power for what purpose. By taking Lenin's place within the conspiratorial nucleus, he was given an effective instrument to play with: the Bolshevik cadres and rank-and-file. And it was this that enabled him to make his dramatic contribution to history.

Lenin, apparently beside himself at what he conceived of as the imminence of the Revolution (his writing throughout this period is almost hysterically optimistic), was so euphoric that he actually wanted the Bolsheviks to come out for power *as Bolsheviks—i.e.*, in defiance of practically the whole country. Since he was obsessed by the notion that the German working class was also on the eve of a great Rising and hence thought of the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia as a mere holding-operation until the German and doubtless the European industrial working class surged into power and relieved the Bolshevik fortress, he regarded an open Bolshevik seizure of power as entirely feasible.

Trotsky was equally euphoric, but since his real authority derived from his influence within the Soviet, it was only natural for him to devise a strategy that in this case coincided with political sense. He insisted on presenting the Bolshevik *putsch* as an operation of the Soviet itself. The Bolsheviks, he announced, were defending the Soviet whose existence was being threatened by the "class enemy."

In this way Trotsky neutralised all effective opposition from the Mensheviks and Social-

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Revolutionaries in the Soviet. However infuriated the Bolsheviks' rivals might have been by the *putsch*—they were *livid*—they would not "come out" against the Bolsheviks, since in spite of everything they remained "fellow-Socialists." The Bolshevik monopoly could exploit the celebrated Socialist slogan: "no enemies on the Left." And not merely was this strategy successful during the immediate aftermath of October, but the entirely fictitious identification of the Bolshevik Party with the democratic institution of "the Soviet" enabled the Bolsheviks to sustain this camouflage throughout the Civil War.

It was, in short, Trotsky's imposture that put the Bolsheviks in power and then saved their lives. The imposture has survived to this day: it is embedded in the very name of the Soviet Union.

IN THIS SENSE IT MAY SURELY be said that Trotsky created the Soviet régime. If it was Lenin's decision that launched the insurrection, it was Trotsky's implementation of it that ensured the Bolshevik victory and its consolidation.

Trotsky created the tactic, devised the strategy, and fathered the fiction underlying the Soviet state. And the key element in this complex event was that it was made successful by the German subsidy. The Kaiser's money had played a strange "dialectical" role in historic events. On the one hand it enabled the Bolsheviks, a weak and poor minority, to bamboozle the Russian majority; on the other, by inadvertently cutting Lenin out of the day-to-day leadership of his own party as a result of the July scandal, it enabled Trotsky to consummate his own historical role.

And if more irony is called for, it must surely be that the true story could never be revealed. For all his theatricalism, for all his grandiloquence, for all his large-scale view of himself, for all his self-consciousness *vis-à-vis* History, Trotsky could never broadcast just what he had done.

The Bolshevik-German partnership could never be acknowledged by the Bolsheviks, by the Germans, or by Trotsky—least of all.

No Noise

When all day
Noise had surrounded me,
When every entrance
Was at least two slammed doors,
And every voice
A yell or a screech,
And almost continually
The telephone for someone unknown—

Then this time,
The middle of the night
Or rather, the early morning,
Was precious,
A little space of peace
Enclosing me.
Yet how hard we are to please:
Now that I have silence
Almost all the time
That silence shines no longer.

Elizabeth Jennings

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LETTERS

Gershwin's Analysis

THE STORY of George Gershwin's fatal illness has been told by many of his friends and contemporaries [Leo Rosten in the December ENCOUNTER, p. 94]. I would merely draw attention to a recent intimate account in the memoirs of S. N. Behrman (*Tribulations and Laughter*, pp. 252–6, published by Hamish Hamilton in 1972). Behrman was a close friend of the Gershwins, and it is clear from his circumstantial account that neither Gershwin's Los Angeles nor his New York psycho-analyst seriously suspected organic brain disease, and that in an atmosphere where every symptom was attributed to emotional causes it was left to a playwright to recognise the physical nature of the illness and to invoke the aid of Dr Victor Dandy of Johns Hopkins Hospital—alas, too late.

HENRY MILLER

University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Were the Intellectuals Duped?

I HOPE it doesn't sound patronising to say that right from its foundation, ENCOUNTER has been in the van of intellectual journals which have had no taint of compromise with the tyranny that has masqueraded as progress in Russia, and George Watson's devastating article on the barbarities which have been condoned and even embraced by Left intellectuals was in the right tradition. However, it is a truism to say that there is no point in going over these matters, which cannot bring back the dead, except as a warning to help prevent the repetition of these inhuman enormities.

Nowadays, we can all see that the same intellectual treason against liberty and humanity is being perpetrated in favour of the new so-called communist giant, Mao's China; and it was saddening to see that ENCOUNTER, of all papers, published a truly deplorable apologia for the tyranny there in a recent issue. The article, by Lady Wootton (who, I believe, calls herself a socialist), was in the worst tradition of the sort of thing exposed by Mr Watson. It is not possible in the course of what, in view of space considerations, must be a short letter, to discuss this article in detail so perhaps it would be sufficient if I just mentioned her ladyship's opinion that it is quite right that 700 million political prisoners of the régime should not be allowed trade unions. Could Beatrice Webb have put it better? How come ENCOUNTER publishes this wretched stuff?

Not that you are alone, unfortunately. About the same time, *The Observer* published an article by Prof. John Kenneth Galbraith (I fancy he was on the same red-carpet VIP trip as Lady Wootton). This giant intellectual (he found room to tell us he is six-foot-seven) filled the front page of the Review section with observations every bit as nauseating as those which had, in my view, disgraced ENCOUNTER. Far from learning from the *trahison des clercs* of an earlier generation of intellectual dupes (though I am inclined to go along with Mr Watson in his view that they were worse than dupes), Long John Galbraith actually falls into the trap of voicing almost word for word a remark made by an earlier American intellectual which has echoed down the years in infamy ever since. Your readers will not be unfamiliar with the words of Lincoln Steffens who, on his return to New York after a visit to the Soviet Union in the 1920s, uttered the words: "I have seen the future, and it works." And Galbraith actually has the nerve to tell us, living in comparative freedom, that "it works for the Chinese." As though Mao's millions really are blue ants and not humans like us (he doesn't deny that the tyranny wouldn't work for us!).

I can but trust that the publication of George Watson's article is an assurance that ENCOUNTER stands where it stood and the publication of Lady Wootton's piece was an aberration.

L. E. WEIDBERG

London

YOUR CORRESPONDENT *R*, in his Column [ENCOUNTER, January], politely assures me I can't be right in claiming [December] that Auden, MacNeice, Spender, Day Lewis and the rest knew about Soviet exterminations in the 1930s, or that Communism attracted them because it was violent. And he gives these reasons:

1. He knew them; they seemed nice; and a belief in violence would have been "grotesquely and laughably out of character." Well, all this speaks well for their charm, which I too can report on unreservedly, since it survived the War. But then my argument was about what they believed, and charming people can surely believe in the most awful things.

2. They wrote poems, which do not commit. But some of my texts were prose, like Auden's *New Statesman* article from Civil War Spain, Gide's *Retour de l'URSS* (1936), and Spender's *Forward from Liberalism* (1937). Do 20th-century poets, in any case, never mean what they say in poems—not even when, like Auden's "Spain", poems are written under no external constraint and for use as propaganda? As for metaphor, I'm sure that *R*, who uses it in his own prose without inviting disbelief, and who may recall that Christ sometimes spoke in parables, already knows that it is the opposite of what is literal rather than of what is true.

3. Even party-members, says *R*, being Englishmen, retained an "irreducible residue of feeling" which was not Marxist. I accept all that as likely, though it doesn't alter my conclusion that they knew about Soviet brutality and supported it. Why should it? A man's political convictions are not the only fact of his mind or even, self-evidently, the most important.

4. They were "strangely uninterested and incurious" about Russian life. Agreed they were not curious enough. But many of Spender's details in *Forward from Liberalism* are based, with acknowledgment, on

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Soviet Communism (1935) by Sidney and Beatrice Webb; and the Webbs' book, which sold widely, includes an entire section devoted to Soviet concentration camps.

R directs my attention to that "higher frivolity" of poets which sometimes escapes their academic critics. I can't believe it is only, or mainly, academics who find extermination unamusing. Let us consider for an instant what his theory would require us to believe about the 1930s poets. I suggest that if literary Stalinism were little more than a pose or a joke, that would be a reason for doubting their judgment, whether as men or as poets, even more radically than we now do.

GEORGE WATSON

St John's College,
Cambridge

Kafka & Friend

THE person whom Ellen B. Hill ["Kafka and Felice Bauer", ENCOUNTER, October p. 116] met in Florence in 1935 was not Felice Bauer but her friend Grete Bloch, who was also a friend of Franz Kafka.

Felice Bauer married in 1919. In 1931 she and her family moved to Switzerland and in 1936 to the United States, where she died in 1960.

MARIANNA STEINER

London

Vienna in the '20s

ALTHOUGH I enjoyed *R*'s charming reminiscences of his stay in Vienna in the 1920s (August 1973) I cannot help feeling surprised that he finds the book by Janik and Toulmin on *Wittgenstein's Vienna* fascinating. The only thing I found fascinating about this book was its misstatements and mistranslations. Like *R*, I am not qualified to speak about Wittgenstein as a philosopher, but I can claim some knowledge about the Vienna allegedly described in the book and about Karl Kraus who, by the way, did not call Vienna a "laboratory of world destruction" but, paraphrasing an earlier remark by Viktor Adler, spoke about *"die österreichische Versuchsstation des Weltuntergangs* (an Austrian experimental station of the end of the world)."

It is ridiculous to be told that the Jews in Austria were counted as Germans because Yiddish was regarded as a German dialect. To the best of my knowledge Viktor Adler, Karl Kraus, and Sigmund Freud had not the slightest knowledge of Yiddish, and certainly did not write in Yiddish. According to the authors, all the intellectuals in old Vienna knew each other, because there was only one "real university", namely in Vienna. No one seems to have told them that there were five "real universities" with teaching in German in Austria, apart from the Czech university in Prague. The authors also report on a duel between the young Freud and the young Viktor Adler, when nothing of the kind has—or ever could have—happened. I am not going to bore your readers with a detailed list of where the authors went wrong, but I should like to acquaint them with a particular gem (p. 277): "Where Austria-Hungary had its Friedjung and Redl affairs, the Soviet Union has been afflicted similarly by its Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn, its Medvedev and Sakharov affairs." What the authors obviously did not know is that the Friedjung affair was a controversy on whether certain documents were genuine or faked. The Redl affair was a case of espionage. Could anyone point out to me a common denominator between these affairs and those of Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn?

If it should be argued that even so, the book has been a great success. I could counter this only with an untranslatable aphorism by Karl Kraus *"Je grösser der Stiefel, desto grösser der Absatz"* (the bigger the shoe, the bigger the heel)"—the German word *Stiefel* meaning both "boot" and "rubbish" and "*Absatz*" both "heel" and "sale."

J. W. BRUEGEL

London

Who's Afraid of "Bourgeois Ideology"?

IT MAY NOT be necessary to challenge Klaus Mehnert, for most of the illusions and half-truths in his article on "Moscow & the New Left" [February] were disposed of by Professor Karel van het Reve in his article in the very same number of ENCOUNTER. Is this your new editorial approach to analysis and polemic? Set 'em up and knock 'em down? Didn't it happen once before: when you published the naïve impressions of Baroness Wootton on China, and then published Paul Hollander's brilliant dissection of precisely that species of naïveté in a subsequent issue?

Mehnert may well have been born and educated in Russia, but if he believes that the Bolshevik dictatorship has no fear of "bourgeois ideology" then he might well have been living on the moon. Everything about the "bourgeois" world—which means the outside world, in all its variegated forms—inspires mortal *angst* in an ignorant little faction of totalitarian ideologists who are afraid of their own shadows. They fear American jazz and blue-jeans. They fear the British *Beatles*. They fear European books—and their own, whether written by Boris Pasternak *(Dr Zhivago* has still not been published) or by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. They dread John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*—precisely because of its "middle-class" insistence on diversity and tolerance. They hate, most of all, John Milton's ideological manifesto to the so-called English bourgeois revolution—as the Soviet Marxists would have it (but not only they: also Professors Christopher Hill and Eric Hobsbawm). I refer to his *Areopagitica* (1644), which was a plea for "the liberty of unlicensed printing."

Well, we in the bourgeois world have our unlicensed printing. And they in Klaus Mehnert's world of fearless Marxist ideology still have to muster up the courage to dare to print something they deeply

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disagree with! Unafraid of "bourgeois ideology"? Why, their bowels relax with fright at the thought of having to face—culturally, intellectually, politically—what every one of us has to confront, every day and proudly, in the "bourgeois" world! The Soviet Five-Year-Plan doesn't provide enough trousers to equip them to face "fearlessly" such terrors. But that's the wrong end of the embarrassment. Three hundred and thirty years after John Milton's *Areopagitica* there is still a *grande peur* of free speech, open debate, and dissenting opinion. From Lenin's Moscow to Mao's Peking a spectre continues to haunt the Marxist world—the spectre of bourgeois ideology!

J. L. B. PHILLIPS

Oxford

Malaysia Malaise

I WAS SADDENED by your footnote to D. J. Enright's letter (ENCOUNTER, October). It conveys, for me, the clear message that your former adviser on South-east Asia is unduly fastidious about all this Malays-and-Malaysia business—a wit and highly publishable, maybe, but eccentric, and isolated in taking offence. But there was serious matter in Enright's last paragraph. He protested, rightly, against Peter Schmid's furtherance of the doctrine that the Malaysian Chinese are foreigners (ENCOUNTER, August). It is generous of you, but implausible, to blame it all on the translation. For instance, Schmid was happy enough to revive the bogy of a Chinese fifth column and the "tradition of several thousand years."

However, fundamentally his argument was that the Chinese are not to be blamed, because the Malays have pushed them on to the defensive. What was most distasteful about the article, indeed, was not its implicitly pro-Malay terminology but the fact that its overt tone was contemptuously anti-Malay. As well as being out of sympathy with his subject (wasn't Musa's office air-conditioned or something?), Schmid had some misleading things to say about the Kedah by-election. Siti Nor (not "Chitty" Nor), contesting a seat vacated by the former Premier (not the Premier), lost by some 6,000 votes (not by an ace). On the other hand she is not precisely "obscure", being the daughter of the Malay populist leader Hamid Tuah. And I search my mind in vain for the accurate German word that, in translation, could have turned her inaccurately into a "non-indigenous" person. It was pleasing to spot, between the lines, the admission that there are Malays who share the Chinese dislike of begging, but it is an audacious hypothesis that Malay social radicalism is somehow not Malay, somehow not part of the real pressures and aspiration which UMNO is doing its modest best to balance and control through the Second Malaysia Plan. Mr Schmid's snide comments about feudalism echo the Singaporean and D.A.P. ideology that Malay national feeling is just a creation of vested interests. I would recommend to his attention the alternative hypothesis that the strength of Malay feeling owes a great deal to the emergence of Singaporean ideology on the Malaysian scene in 1964. At all events one should not expect to understand the dynamics of Malaysian politics without attempting to take some account of the political culture of the largest group.

I hope I do not appear fastidious in my turn. But there is already a surfeit of inaccurate and tendentious writing on South-east Asia, and it would be sad to see ENCOUNTER become one of those publications which one cannot automatically recommend to one's students.

R. G. KERSHAW

University of Kent,
Canterbury

Germans & Jews

HAVING JUST read H. U. Kempski's somewhat patronising piece on Chancellor Brandt's visit to Israel in the September ENCOUNTER, may I take the liberty of making a few comments?

As one of the reporters assigned to cover at least part of Brandt's visit to Israel I am rather taken aback by Kempski's observations with which not only I but other members of "Israel's malleable press" (to quote Kempski) can only disagree.

Having re-read through the reporting on the visit, I can only say that Kempski's heavy interpretation of the word *"Freundschaft"* does not carry weight. If the Prime Minister refers to friendship it is between the sovereign states of West Germany and Israel; no one can conceive at this time in history of the kind of relationship that such a word reflects between the Germans and the Jewish people. But the exigencies of *realpolitik* and of relations being as they are, so the sovereign states do pursue friendship.

It is typical of the kind of report supplied by Kempski that he chose to ignore the most salient fact that the demonstration of friendship by Israel's leaders and the invited guests at the Accadia Grand Hotel was for Willy Brandt the anti-Nazi, but not for Germany as such. Indeed the demonstrators against the Brandt visit (curiously enough, Kempski never noticed them) carried banners which read: "Brandt is not Germany, he is the minority." Indeed, in Brandt Israelis saw the "other Germany" which Ben-Gurion had spoken so much about when seeking to regularise relations between the two Governments.

The organisation of the anti-Nazi fighters, partisans and ghetto survivors did call off its talked-of demonstration but out of respect for Brandt, the person. In its announcement at the time, it protested that the West Germans were uninterested in putting on trial the many thousands of Nazi war criminals still at large (naturally, there are many more in East Germany).

I was present at Brandt's appearance at the Labour Party Central Committee and considered it a superb performance by an extremely astute politician. As one Labour veteran observed later, "What can you say about a man like that? After all, he did fight the Nazis, and indeed was one of the few Germans to do so. Then he quotes at us from Martin Buber about the nature of Zionism and quotes from Heine in German about 'the ramrod Germans'. . . ."

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The background of Brandt's visit was the deterioration in relations between the two sister Social Democratic parties as a consequence of the West German Government's handling of the massacre of 11 Israeli sportsmen at the Munich Olympics and the aftermath—namely the release of the murderers in capitulation to Arab blackmail. Indeed the German press has charged collusion between the Arab terrorist organisations and official German bodies in facilitating this deal.

Kempski may not know it, but "Israel's malleable press" was full of comments shortly before Brandt's arrival, with many major columnists holding the opinion that Brandt was coming to Israel as an emissary of the German majority who like to feel (as Kempski apparently does) that the spilt blood has become water. The difference between an ordinary German and a Bonn Foreign Ministry official is that for the latter oil is really much thicker than blood. Thus, who better than Brandt the "good German" to come and sell this departure away from the special relationship which Adenauer, a monumentally good German, had considered Germany's duty towards the remnants of the Jewish people. Having since then read what Brandt said about Stalin and the *détente*, I wonder how long the old fervour of social democracy will survive in the Chancellory.

Finally, I am surprised that Kempski has allowed himself to be drawn into internal Israeli politics. It is amazing that a journalist of his standing should permit himself to peddle unreliable political statements. From which poll does he get Dayan's popu-

Sidney Hook:

ONE OF THE MOST DISCOURAGING SIGNS *of the degradation of contemporary academic life is the attack upon the entire concept of objectivity and truth—not by the nihilists of the counter-culture, but by some academics from within. Their position is comparable to lawyers who proclaim that there is no such thing as justice, that* **all** *law is nothing but the expression of power of one group over another and that therefore there is no such thing as objective guilt or innocence—indeed that there is no difference between guilt or innocence except difference in the degree of might between "aggressor" and "victim".*

An analogous view is held by certain journalists who ridicule the notion that there are such things as "objective facts." They assert that any selection of events necessarily distorts reality, is inescapably subjective, and that objective reporting is a myth. Why, then, complain that a news story is biased, or slanted, or false? The slight difficulty that attends this position is that the difference between truth and fiction disappears altogether.

THE FUNDAMENTAL FALLACY *in all such writing and thinking consists in going from the valid proposition that no one can legitimately claim to possess the* complete *or* whole *or* final *truth to the absurd proposition that no one can establish any truth at all. Similarly with respect to justice. It is questionable whether a judge can properly claim to dispense absolute or complete justice. And Hegel may be right in warning that the pursuit of absolute justice may sometimes result in greater injustice than what would have resulted in less fanatical effort to achieve absolute justice (especially in attempting to redress wrongs of the distant past).*

But this does not gainsay in the least the difference between just and unjust decisions. Nor does it follow because every historical conclusion is modifiable in the light of further evidence, that no historical assertions are warranted. Granting the truisms that objectivity, especially in human affairs, is difficult and that absolute objectivity is unattainable, why should "objectivity" be dismissed as a myth? An honest man may be hard to find, and an absolutely honest man may not ever exist. But this does not wipe out the distinction between honesty and dishonesty, or prevent us from recognising the difference between a man who files a claim for an accident that happened, and a man who files a claim for an accident he knows never happened.

THE LEVEL OF THINKING *to which this confusion has led is illustrated in an article by Robert Gorham Davis of Columbia University in the* Columbia Forum. *In screaming headlines, "The Professors Lie", he charges that when American scholars profess to be in quest of objective truth, they are deceiving their students, the public, and themselves. They "lie" because, according to him, there is no such thing as objective truth about human affairs. The incoherence of this position is apparent on its very face. If we charge someone with uttering "a lie," this necessarily presupposes that we know what the truth is. Otherwise, how could we legitimately accuse him of "lying" or even of being "mistaken" where there is no intent to deceive?*

This confusion sometimes takes less simplistic forms. The interpretive reporter who falls back on the excuse that "all selection is a distortion of the real pattern of events" to extenuate a libellous hatchet-job, must know the truth about the pattern that is being "distorted". The 20th-century historian who says of Gibbon that "he reflects the 18th century more than the centuries (of the Roman Empire) he writes about," cannot use this judgment to buttress historical scepticism. For he must be in a position to claim to have objective truths about the Roman Empire and about the 18th century to pass this judgment on Gibbon. Otherwise, he lays himself

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larity? (It has been a stable 86% since 1967.) From which source did he get his stuff about Dayan's position in his party? If he is no vote-catcher why did the entire Party leadership, in fear that he would stand aside at the elections this year, accept his working programme for the administered territories? Where did he get the idea that Israelis no longer believe in the threat of Arab aggression?

May I, as a Jew living in Israel, advise Hans Ulrich Kempski that when he next leaves Munich for what he calls the "Promised Land" he should be a trifle less patronising at the modern miracle of the emergence of a sovereign Jewish state from the world wreckage perpetrated by his people not so long ago.

MARK SEGAL

The Jerusalem Post

"Meaningless"?

I WAS STARTLED to find the following, by M. M. Mahood, in your September issue:

". . . confronted him with meaningless, gratuitous evil (in a way that Hiroshima and Belsen did a later generation). . . ."

Leaving aside the oddity of characterising either Hiroshima or Belsen as "meaningless", I venture to question the validity of linking the two as if they were on the same level.

Belsen—need the difference be pointed out?—was the fruit of a deliberate, calculated program of racial extermination that had nothing to do with the survival or self-defense of the nation that was practicing it. Hiroshima was an aerial attack in a war that

Anyone for Objectivity?

open to the retort that what *he* believes about Gibbon and the 18th century reflects the 20th century more than the 18th. And if so, how can he be so confident that he knows that Gibbon is giving us an inadequate account of Rome, and a less inadequate one of the 18th century?

To be sure, in the humanities it is much more difficult to establish truths than in the natural or social sciences. One can hold that in the field of the humanities we are more concerned in exploring meanings and significances and their complex interrelations than in establishing truths. As John Dewey reminded us, the world of meaning is much more comprehensive than the world of truth, just as the realm of the possible is more encompassing than the world of the actual. But even with respect to the determination of "meaning," if one asserts that "X possesses a certain meaning in a particular context," he is committed to the belief that the assertion is true and its denial false; and he must marshal evidence and argument in its support. Anything may **be said,** *but not everything* **goes.**

WE MUST ALSO BEAR IN MIND *that there are modes of experience to which the term "truth" is inapplicable or irrelevant,* **e.g.,** *musical compositions—and some other artistic creations. Further, there are some choices that establish conventions, rules of procedure, or rules of the road (driving on the left or right), about which we do not ask whether they are true but rather whether they are convenient, helpful, efficient or economical.*

The definitions of "truth" and "objectivity" have their complexities. This is also true for the definitions of "justice" or "health." They cannot be explored here. But they do not prevent us in the least from establishing that some propositions are true and others false, that some persons are more guilty than others, healthier than others, or that the same person who was very ill in the past is now well.

A further source of confusion is the tendency to identify what is relative with what is "subjective" where the latter term has the connotation of the arbitrary. Relative to one charge, a person may be innocent; relative to another, the same person may be guilty. Relative to one organism milk may be nutritious; relative to another, it may be harmful. But all of these judgments, although relative or relational, are objective, supported by relevant evidence and good reasons.

THE CURRENT ANIMUS *against objectivity among some younger academics, and even an occasional older professor who wants "to be with the young" or "in the vanguard", flows from a desire to be relieved of the responsibility of having to establish the truth of what they say or having to disprove the truth or validity of what they do not like to hear. A cult of irresponsibility has developed in some universities which regard consecutive thinking and respect for evidence as "reactionary."*

It is not too farfetched to argue that, psychologically, such sceptical attitudes towards the possibility of truth contribute to the persistence of violence on the campus. If there is no such thing as objective evidence or warranted assertion—if the quest for truth is dismissed as a rationalisation for power or prestige—how shall we determine which views or opinions are to prevail when they conflict?

The answer some students and even some professors give is that truth depends upon power, that ideas are **merely** *weapons, and that true ideas are those that can muster up enough support behind them to prevent doctrines that are disliked from being heard. To some extent, the disregard of the objective evidence and argument concerning the inheritability of genetic traits flows not from scientific doubt, but from doubts about the possibility of scientific truth where emotions are involved. Bertrand Russell once observed that the reason truth is not more often discovered is that people do not wish to find it.*

To which we may add: the easiest rationalisation for the refusal to seek the truth is the denial that truth exists, and that there is a method by which it may be reached.

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had long since made indiscriminate bombardment from the air a usual practice on both sides.

Except that it was instantaneous instead of being prolonged over weeks, months, and years, the Atomic bomb on Hiroshima did to that city what British saturation bombing had for years been doing to German cities.

Do Ms Mahood and the editors of ENCOUNTER believe that there is a great moral difference between incinerating men, women and children with tons of phosphorous bombs night after night and doing the same thing in minutes by atomic energy?

It can certainly be argued (as I would myself) that *all* indiscriminate bombardment from the air is immoral and impermissible. But it is surely fatuous to condone one kind of bombing, presumably because it is old-fashioned and slow, while striking moral attitudes over another kind, because it is new and swift.

I have a query: do Ms Mahood and the editors of ENCOUNTER put the RAF bombings of Hamburg on a level with Auschwitz as "meaningless and gratuitous"?

RICHARD HANSER

Mamaroneck, New York

Our German Cousins

Anglo-German Relations in the 19th and 20th Centuries

JOHN MANDER

'Mr Mander has resisted the temptation to give us a potted version. What he *has* given us is a complex study of the interaction of some of the principal currents of English and German philosophical and literary thought. From the more recent past, Keynes emerges with his stature still further enhanced, and Vansittart, alas, with his distinctly reduced. Mr Mander, given the difficulty of his task, has succeeded uncommonly well.' Bernard Levin in *The Observer*.

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AUTHORS

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London

STANDARDS SURE IS IMPROVING: The problems of bad pronunciation and grammar by BBC presenters and news readers is improving, Mr Ian Trethowan, head of BBC radio, said today.

Some months ago, following complaints, the BBC launched a drive to iron out some of the worst mistakes.

The drive has paid off. There are fewer split-infinitives and less sloppy pronunciation. But he admitted that mistakes were still being made.

EVENING STANDARD

The *Evening Standard* reported on Friday: "The problems of bad pronunciation and grammar by BBC presenters and news readers is improving." Clearly the culprits have joined the *Standard*.

THE TIMES

Paris

TRANSLATION ERROR: *The American press must have a psychological block when it comes to the Russian language. In 50 years of reading U.S. newspapers I have not seen a single—repeat single—correct translation of anything written in Russian. The caption under the photo of Jews demanding visas for Israel is no exception. The signs carried by the men in the picture do not say, "Visas for Israel or Prison Together" as stated, but "Visas for Israel* Instead *of Prisons." The confusion arose because the mysterious linguist translating the text mixed two Russian words. "Vmeste" means* together, *and "vmesto"* instead of. *The grammatical structure of the phrase makes the use of "vmeste" ludicrous.*

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

Rome

AL' ITALIANA: *The Italian Communist Party, the country's second largest political group and the strongest Marxist movement in the West, has sparked heated debate in political circles here with a suggestion that it should form some sort of pact with the dominant Christian Democrats. Communist Party Secretary Enrico Berlinguer called for what he termed a "compromesso storico" (historic compromise) between the Communists and the Christian Democrats—an idea which has been aired from time to time by Italian Marxists, usually under the name "blocco storico" (historic bloc).*

But the word "compromise" was new, and, at first sight, it seemed to inject a new element into an old concept.

The Party secretary's choice of words soon landed him in trouble. Only days after he first mooted the idea in an article for the Communist periodical "Rinascita", his party chairman, Luigi Longo, was questioning the wisdom of using the word "compromise."

In an apparent rebuke published by the party newspaper "L'Unita", Signor Longo confessed that "I don't much like the expression and I'm not sure if it correctly conveys the idea."

Pointing out that the idea owed its origins to party theorist Antonio Gramsci back in the 1930s, the veteran Communist leader said he still preferred the word "bloc" to describe the policy of seeking an understanding with the Christian Democrats.

"In my view, the noun compromise does not fully convey the sense of a movement and of the corporateness of a bloc", he wrote.

EVENING STANDARD

Toronto

FRAN-CAN: *In what may well be a losing battle, the French language office of the Quebec Ministry of Education has been flooding garages and service stations this summer with black and yellow posters designed to stem the tide of Anglicisms. They frown on such phrases, popular among six million French-speaking Canadians, as "Checker le gas."*

As part of this effort a whole series of booklets dealing with specific fields is being issued. In the insurance business alone, according to the booklet on this subject, 269 errors are commonly made. "Un examen medical," for example, is not *"un check-up." And to call a politician "un politicien" is an insult. He would have you know that he is "un homme politique."*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Blackpool

IMAGERY: *A constant feature of conference reporting is the extravagant use of clichés and unconnected metaphors. There is something about conferences which seems to encourage excess in this, as in much else.*

"The Sunday Times" produced a good yield. Their headline had Harold Wilson off the hook. The row over the 25 companies was coming to a head but a formula had emerged after hours of horse-trading. The formula, the report continued, was a two-way bet but Wilson would win the day and avoid a split. Then, having set the party's sights on power, he would be able to shrug off the 25 firm issue. (Memo to party marksmen: once you have set your sights, never shrug: it will spoil your aim.)

The "Daily Express" yesterday came up with a golfing metaphor, with Wilson out of the rough. "The Sun", in what it described as a double shocker, had a left winger throwing down the gauntlet and then, a few lines later, dropping a bombshell.

"The Observer" spoke of the danger of the party lurching to the left. A day later the "Daily Mail" used the same phrase but said the lurch had already occurred.

THE TIMES

Surrey

ECUMENICAL BUSINESS: Notice reported from a Surrey youth club—"Drama Group Play Reading, Monday . . . T. S. Eliot's 'Merger in the Cathedral'."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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Malcolm Lowry

A Biography

Douglas Day

'Scrupulous and level headed . . . fairminded and sensible to a degree quite remarkable in an academic biographer of a contemporary figure . . . . Lowry, as Day presents him, flawed, hopeful, impossible, is always believable, a genuine portrait of the artist as both a young dog and an old monster.'—A. Alvarez in the *New York Times Book Review*. Illustrated £5 *forthcoming*

Selected Poems

Osip Mandelstam

Translated by W. S. Merwin and Clarence Brown

Born in 1891, Osip Mandelstam was one of the great Russian poets who, like Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova, bore witness to the terrible plight of Russia under Stalin. For this he paid with his life, but the poems live on, testimony to the greatness of the poet and the courage of the man. This is the first substantial selection to appear in English. £2.50

Golden Codgers

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Richard Ellmann

'At times the insights are positively stunning.'—*Financial Times*. 'Mr Ellmann is a very good critic . . . . His practice is so skilful, his acquaintance with the literary history of the past 100 years so impeccable, and his style so unobtrusively elegant, that one is almost wholly won over.'—Bernard Bergonzi in *The Observer*. £3.50

Collected Plays

Volume I

Wole Soyinka

Wole Soyinka's plays all have a vital energy that so often seems lacking in present-day English dramatic writing. Five of them are collected in this volume: the vivid and poetic *A Dance of the Forests*, the desolate *The Swamp Dwellers*, *The Strong Breed*, *The Road*, and *The Bacchae of Euripides*. £1.50 Oxford Paperbacks

After Dark

David Harsent

'David Harsent's new collection *After Dark* leaves most of his contemporaries at the starting-gate. These are dark and magnificent poems in which memory and landscape are deftly balanced. If the word 'classic' means anything, then these poems are examples of it. There is an exactness about Mr Harsent's judgement which allows the reader not only to view his world but to participate in it.'—*Sunday Times*. Paper covers 90p

Candle in the Wind

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Translated by Keith Armes in association with Arthur Hudgins

This is the first publication in English of this play written by Solzhenitsyn in 1960; the translation has been approved by the author. The play has an international rather than a Russian setting. It deals with a fundamental moral problem—whether science should use its techniques to manipulate or change human personality. £1.50 *Published jointly with the Bodley Head*

Oxford

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